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WANDERINGS AND EXCURSIONS
IN
SOUTH WALES;
INCLUDING
THE COURSE OF THE WYE.















WANDERINGS AND EXCURSIONS

IN

SOUTH WALES;

INCLUDING THE

SCENERY OF THE RIVER WYE.

BY THOMAS ROSCOE, ESQ.

FORTY-EIGHT ENGRAVINGS, BY RADCLYFFE,

FROM DRAWINGS BY

COX, HARDING, FIELDING, CRESWICK, WATSON, &c.

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TO THE

QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY,

THIS WORK

IS HUMBLY DEDICATED AND INSCRIBED,

BY HER MAJESTY'S

MOST DUTIFUL, GRATEFUL,

AND OBEDIENT SERVANTS,

THE PUBLISHERS.







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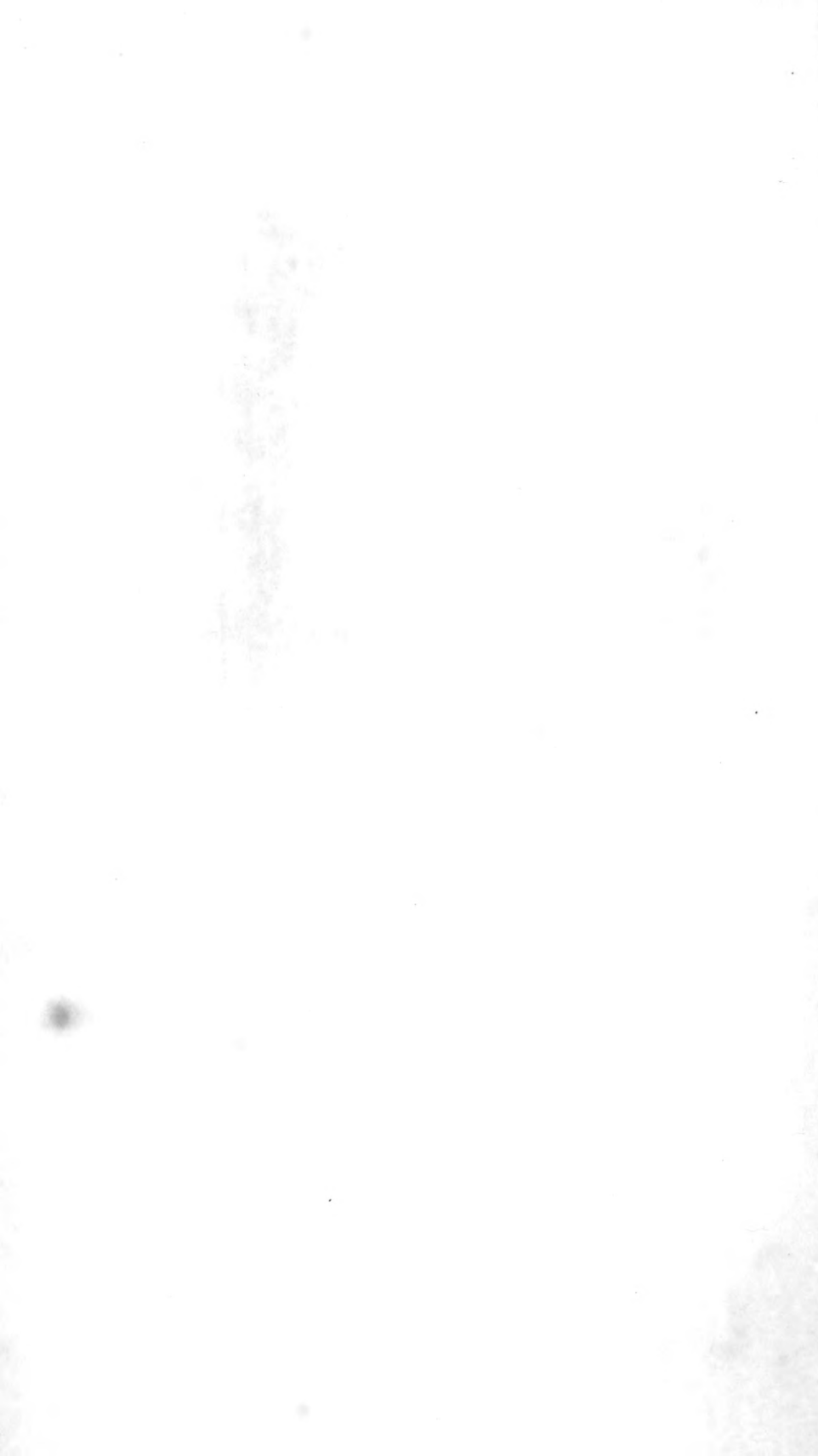
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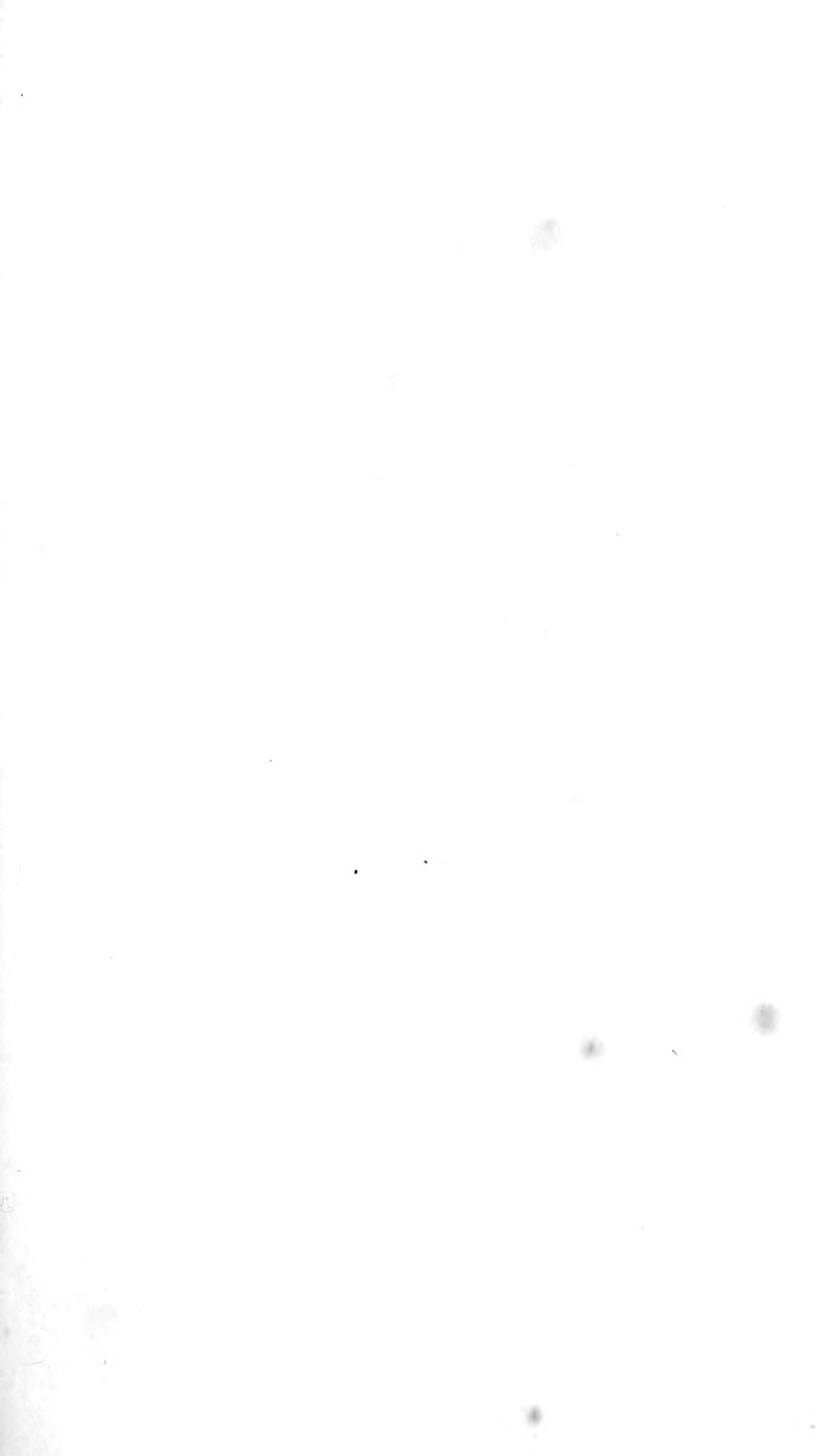
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Wanderings through South Wales.

CHAPTER I.

ABERYSTWITH.

DAME Nature drew these mountaynes in such sort,
As though the one should yeeld the other grace ;
Or as each hill itself were such a fort,
They scorned to stoope to give the cannon place.
If all were plaine and smooth like garden ground,
Where should hye woods and goodly groves be found?
The eye's delight that lookes on every coast,
With pleasures great and fayre prospect were lost.

Thomas Churchyard's Worthiness of Wales.

THE Pilgrim of SOUTH WALES and the WYE to the friends of the Northern Wanderer giveth kindly greeting, and prayeth for as indulgent listeners to gleanings of legendary lore and way-side travellers' tales, gathered in the districts now laid under contribution, as gladdened the 'Tourist of Snowdonia in his Wanderings among the mountains and moorlands, and grey, crumbling ruins of that beautiful and romantic land.

The Southern counties of Wales have hitherto suffered by an invidious comparison with their better known, and so, better appreciated brethren of the North. It will be well to have this matter of taste more equitably adjusted; and I trust that ere these records of my summer pilgrimage draw to a close, the illustrations (which will prove the best witnesses I can call into this our court of justice on behalf of my South-Cambrian clients) will give most conclusive evidence in favour of these, my much-depreciated friends. The first county-cause we will try is that of Cardiganshire, as, in proceeding from North Wales, we reach his territories first, and arrive at the now fashionable town of Aberystwith, delightfully situated on the north bank of the Rheidol, in the centre of Cardigan Bay, commanding a sea-view of great extent, and of that sublime beauty inseparable from a marine prospect bounded only by the horizon. The hills of the North Welsh coast are distinctly seen on a clear day, stretching far out in the distance, the chain ending with Bardsey Island: Snowdon and Cader Idris are sometimes seen; and, on the south, the coast may be traced as far as St. David's Head. The whole of this ocean-amphitheatre was formerly dry land, and the greater portion remained so until the sixth century, when Gwyddno Garanhir was the reigning prince of the district. It was named Cantrev y Gwaelod, the Lowland Hundred, and is mentioned by the Welsh bards and historians (indeed, the terms are synonymous) as being fertile and beautiful in the highest degree, and containing sixteen fortified towns, and a large population. This fine champaign country extended from Harlech to St. David's Head, and was wholly destroyed by an inundation of the sea, the waters of St. George's Channel having burst over their wonted boun-

daries, and covered its entire extent. Thus was formed the present Bay of Cardigan, whose deep blue waves now roll over many a ruined city and once-mighty fortress lying in irretrievable desolation beneath them. It seems probable, that a sudden sinking of the land aided the inroad of the sea, even if the latter event were not wholly caused by the former, which appears likely.* The present gradual advancement of the sea on this western coast might well lead to the belief of these ancient traditions, even were better proof wanting; but in several places, and more especially at Borth, a few miles north of Aberystwith, when the tide is out, stumps of trees are seen in great numbers in the sand, proving the former existence of a great forest on the spot. The wood, when dug out, is hard, and black as ebony. I am informed by a friend residing at Aberystwith, that a tradition respecting the existence of a great castle on a spot now six miles out in the bay opposite that place, has lately been rather singularly verified by the Admiralty Surveyors; they having found stones on the precise spot, which bear evident signs of having been used in masonry. We cannot but anticipate still further loss of land in the valleys washed by the ocean in this neighbourhood; nor do the mountain barriers themselves offer any very enduring resistance to its mighty strength, for, being wholly composed of a splintery slate rock, they are perpetually crumbling away, and, after great storms, fall in large masses.

* Prince Gwyddno's misfortunes have rendered proverbial a couplet from an old Welsh poet, and any great distress is compared to

‘The sigh of Gwyddno Garanhir
When o’er his land rushed waves severe.’

He was himself a Bard—and one of his poems is a lament for ‘The Inundation of Cantrev y Gwaelod.’ His name is pronounced as though spelt Gweethno Garrañheer.

The Castle Hill forms a favourite promenade for the visitors at Aberystwith, from its commanding and picturesque situation; but each year so much reduces its seaward cliffs, that they, and their hoary ruin-crest, must eventually be swept away. The base of this small promontory is completely caverned by the breakers that dash and foam and thunder in its hollow sides, making most dread but 'eloquent music,' and flinging their light spray over the sea-beat cliffs.

Aberystwith Castle now consists but of a few fragments, among which remain parts of two small towers, and one more lofty, with a gateway. It appears to have been an important post in times of warfare, and is stated to have been originally built by Gilbert de Strongbow, son of Richard de Clare, about the year 1107. Henry the First having given Strongbow permission to win for himself the inheritance of Cadwgan ap Bleddyn, the invader succeeded in his unjust enterprise, and erected two castles, one at Aberystwith, and another in Pembrokeshire, for the protection of his ill-gotten territory. In 1111, Prince Gruffydd ap Rhys came over from Ireland, where he had resided from his childhood, and, being suspected of a desire for sovereignty, he became embroiled with the invaders, and encamped between Llanbadarn and Aberystwith to besiege the castle. In this attempt he was, for a time, defeated; but being more successful in another attack, he took and razed the fort, slew the Normans and Saxons who were settled in Cardiganshire, and restored to the Welsh the lands and habitations of which they had been despoiled. The castle was reinstated by Cadwallader, son of Gruffydd ap Conan, and destroyed by his brother, Owen Gwyneth. It continued to experience all the changeful fortune of predatory warfare, alternately fortified and overthrown. Doubt-

less, it was no very difficult matter to demolish the fortifications then used; but, in course of time, a more powerful master possessed it, and even his provisions for its defence were of little avail against the desperate and enthusiastic struggles of expiring liberty. Edward the First rebuilt this castle in the year 1277, and returned to England in triumph; but the Rulers of the Marches exercised too great severities for peace long to continue between the Prince of Wales and the King of England. The year before the subjection of the Welsh was sealed, they numbered among their many brief but brilliant successes the capture of this newly-erected English fortress. Many more of the invader's strong-holds were at the same time taken by the Welsh, and all the partisans of foreign domination were severely harrassed throughout the country. In the year 1404 Aberystwith Castle was taken by Owen Glendower. In the time of Charles the First, the Parliament permitted it to be used as a mint: some of the pieces of money coined there are frequent in antiquarians' collections, and were of silver from the neighbouring mines. During all the Welsh wars, this fortress was considered of great importance, and, during the civil wars, was regarded as a place of considerable strength. The last and most destructive siege it endured was in the time of the Protectorship, when it was bombarded by the Parliamentary troops, while Mr. Bushel held it for the Royalists. The besiegers occupied a high mount, called Pen-dinas, on the opposite side of the Rheidol, where Prince Rhys had formerly made an entrenchment; and since the overthrow the castle then received, a heap of ruins only have been left to tell of its ancient strength and glory.

About a mile from Aberystwith, on the banks of the

Rheidol, are the remains of an old fortified mansion, which the vulgar call Owen Glendower's Palace, but which was originally erected and occupied by the Monks of Llanbadarn Fawr, the site of whose Monastery was contiguous. Of this, nothing remains save the church, which is of great antiquity, and most beautifully situated in the lovely vale of the Rheidol. It is believed by some, that subterranean passages led from this Monastery to the fortified mansion above-mentioned, Plas Crug, and likewise to Aberystwith castle; but I need hardly remark, that none are known to exist at present. Llanbadarn (the great church of St. Badarn) is supposed to be the Mauritanea where St. Padarn or Paternus founded a monastery and an episcopal see in the sixth century. St. Padarn seems to have been a most ill-used person, for it is recorded that he not only performed the functions of his office without reward, but alleviated the distresses of the poor, as far as his ability permitted; and yet these ungrateful people killed their kind-hearted Archbishop, and, consequently, as punishment for their crime, the bishopric was sunk in that of St. David's, though, in the time of Giraldus, there was still an abbey under the jurisdiction of a layman. Llanbadarn was a city in 987, and was destroyed by the Danes in the reign of Meredydd ap Owen. It now consists chiefly of low, mean cottages, with a few of a better description, and one or two good houses; but at a distance is a very pretty looking village, in one of the loveliest valleys imaginable. The Rheidol winds through it in a succession of graceful bends, beneath rich hanging woods, craggy mountains, and fair pastures; with here and there a white cottage peering from among the trees, and sending up its curling blue smoke, as if to tempt the mimic pencil of the artist.

The Rheidol is crossed near Llanbadarn by a small bridge, and at Aberystwith by one of five arches, overlooking the Harbour, which is small and inconvenient, and the bar, at its mouth, prevents vessels of any size entering, except at spring tides. Many lives are lost, and others constantly endangered for want of a comparatively trifling expenditure in rendering this Harbour a safe and commodious one: and when we consider the immense advantages the town and neighbourhood would derive from an improvement so much needed, and so readily to be accomplished, it does seem a marvellous thing in these enterprising times, that the evil should be tolerated so long.

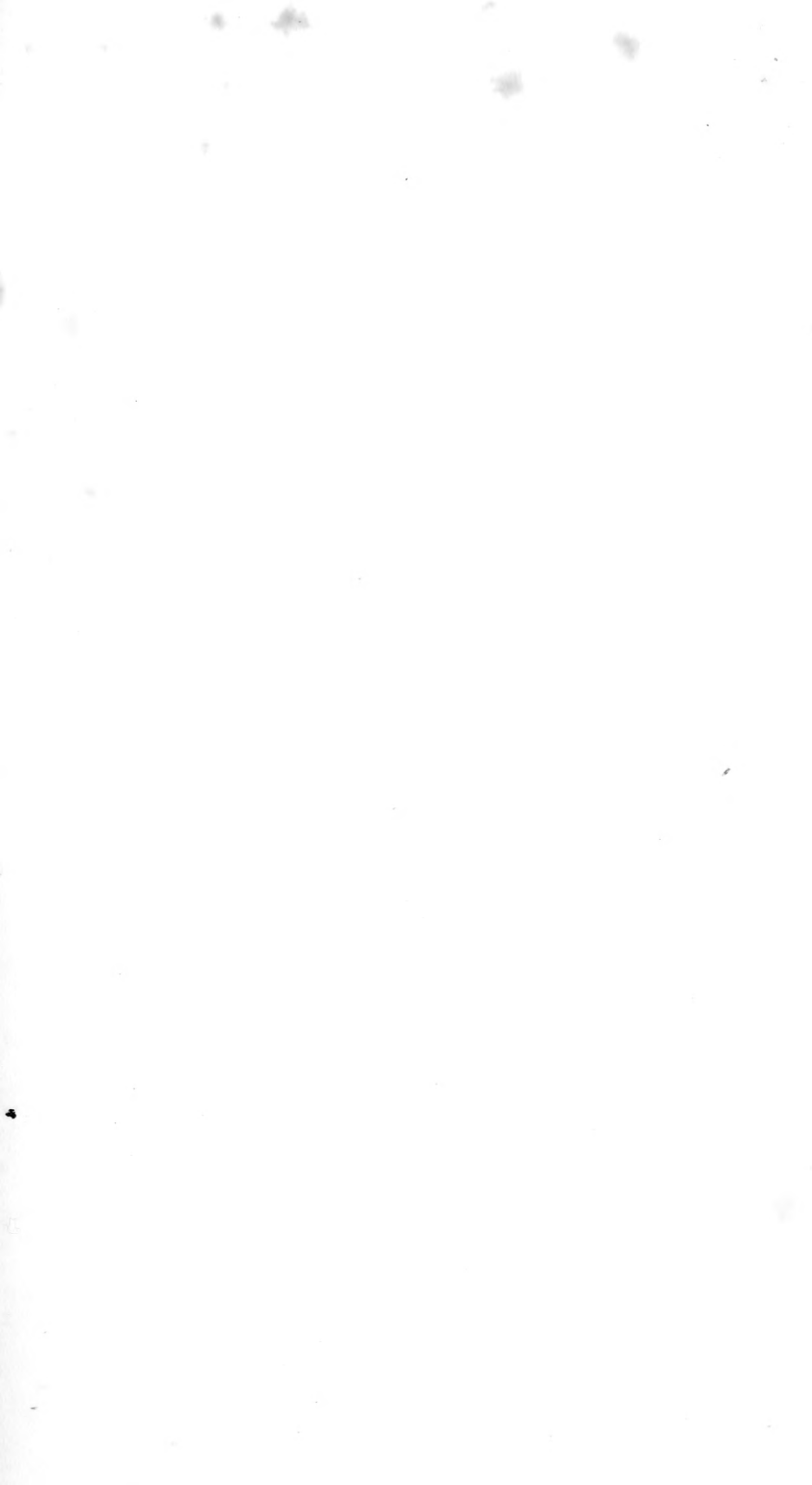
The town of Aberystwith certainly has not much to engage the attention of the tourist; irregular streets, running in a maze-like confusion, compose its greater part; and these, with sorrow be it said, are thickly adorned with ale-house signs. The Marine Terrace, however, is an exceedingly agreeable promenade, forming a semicircle on the margin of the sea, and consisting chiefly of comfortable lodging houses for the accommodation of visitors. Bounded on the north end by the high rock called Craiglais, or Constitution Hill, and on the south by the Castle ruins, it commands in front an uninterrupted view of the ocean, which, at Aberystwith, shows its grandest characteristics. A stiff gale blew for some days after my arrival, and as I sat in my quiet study, on the Terrace, I could see the grand waves come rolling in, each like a huge living mountain, bending its proud head over the cavernous depth below, before taking its last landward leap in scattered, feathery foam; another and another close behind, in endless succession, seemed as if the ocean's boundaries had become too narrow for the world of waters they contain, and

I almost expected Neptune's roaring sea-lions to overleap their allotted bourn, and give a re-enactment of the Cantrev y Gwaelod tragedy.

In the midst of a dark storm one evening, a sloop, seen through the drifting rain and haze, like a spectre of the sea, appeared about three miles out, making for the Harbour, with her sails set, and running before the wind at a gallant rate through a tremendous sea, which seemed alternately to engulf her in its dark abysses, and fling her aloft like a toy on the waves' white crest. A more tempestuous evening has seldom been known here, and the most intense anxiety prevailed all classes lest the vessel should be lost, of which there seemed but too great a probability. Hundreds of persons, both visitors and inhabitants of Aberystwith, were seen hastening to the Harbour; and not a few ladies braved the storm, though scarcely able to proceed, from the excessive violence of the wind. Every spot commanding a view of the sloop was crowded by eager and anxious spectators; some trembling for the fate of husbands, brothers, or friends, whom they believed were on board,—and screaming with agony, as the huge waves half hid the objects of their solicitude from view. But she came along swiftly and unswervingly,—

‘She walked the waters like a thing of life,
And seemed to dare the elements to strife.’

As she neared the bar, the anxiety of the assembled crowd became doubly intense, and yet more painful when the shrill screams of children were heard from the vessel, through all the deep roaring of the winds and waves. Another minute of breathless fear, and the perilous bar was cleared—all lives were safe! The Captain and owner of the sloop had been her pilot, and the screams heard were from two of his own







children, who had been lashed to the mast during the gale. I have since been informed that he is esteemed the most skilful sailor in the country, and the gallant bearing of his beautiful little vessel well proves the truth of such report.

Since writing the preceding, I have heard with great pleasure that some of the leading country gentlemen and residents in Aberystwith have most liberally commenced a subscription for the purpose of improving the Harbour, and thus lessening the danger to vessels entering it.

My brief sojourn at this pleasant place has been fortunately timed, in allowing me to witness, and in some measure partake of, rather unusual festivities, on the coming of age of R. Powell, Esq., son and heir of Colonel Powell, M.P., of Nanteos Park, near Aberystwith. For some time preparations for the due celebration of this event had been making at Nanteos, the family seat, and the high respect and esteem in which the Colonel and his family are held in the neighbourhood, rendered every thing connected with the birthday *fête* a matter of public importance. After a long series of stormy and boisterous days, the weather suddenly cleared, and the fourth of August, the eventful day, was as calm and propitious as could be desired. All Aberystwith was on the *qui vive*; most of the shops were closed, as is generally the case on occasions of any public or private rejoicing in this part of the country, and every one seemed to devote themselves to pleasure and merriment. One of three oxen provided to regale the poor in the neighbourhood, was roasted at Aberystwith, and distributed among the populace, with abundance of ale; while in the Park at Nanteos, three miles from the town, a sumptuous entertainment was provided for the tenantry, to the number of three hundred, who dined

in a large tent on the lawn, and an elegant cold collation was laid in the house for friends of the family and visitors from Aberystwith, who were passing and repassing in carriages of every description nearly all day. The gay attire of the ladies, and the picturesque national costume of the peasantry, contributed not a little to the interest and beauty of the animated scene; while every face beamed with pleasure, and every voice united in extolling the worth and generosity of the hospitable donors of the *fête*. In the evening the town was generally and gaily illuminated, and many windows displayed transparencies, which, if not remarkable for beauty of design, were all demonstrative of kindly feeling; large beacon-fires blazed on all the hills, and shed their red, lurid light on the summer sea, where the small vessels lay quietly at anchor. The whole scene, when the crescent-Terrace was fully illuminated, and the beacons blazing on the heights north and south of it, with the reflection of every light dancing in the water, was brilliant and beautiful in the extreme. The young hero of the day, in an open carriage, accompanied by the family, was drawn into town by the populace, preceded by banners, music, &c. A stranger arriving at Aberystwith in the midst of the festivities, would be somewhat surprized to find such public demonstrations of delight on a comparatively unimportant occasion; but old-fashioned Welsh hospitality seems to seize every opportunity for displaying its hearty munificence and kindly feeling; and births, weddings, majorities, and funerals are celebrated to an extent undreamed of in the lowland districts. About ten o'clock, the lights were taken from the windows, in order to give more effect to the fireworks, which a celebrated pyrotechnist from London had been engaged to exhibit on the beach. The population of both

town and country was assembled on the Terrace, and no little mirth was excited, at the expence of the timid, by the explosion of squibs, crackers, and fireballs, which were flung about with impunity. The metropolitan *artiste* was loudly applauded for the very beautiful designs he exhibited; and never before had the unoffending fish in Cardigan Bay been so assailed by fiery showers of serpents, stars, and rainbow-hued sparks, as on this memorable occasion. Sky-rockets whizzed up from boats at sea, answered by others from the Castle Hill; while ships, flags, wheels, and every variety of device, were spitting and whirling and cracking and curling on shore, with Mr. Powell's initials flaming in the midst. One might fancy the spirit of Owen Glendower gazing with envious astonishment at the phenomena, and believing that a more renowned personage than himself was being honoured by the homage of the supernaturals; for now, as at his fearful birth,

‘ The front of Heav’n was full of fiery shapes ;
The goats ran from the mountains, and the herds
Were strangely clamorous in the frightened fields.’

The hearty cheers with which each successive display was greeted by the sailors in their boats at sea, formed a very delightful part of the grand chorus, and fell pleasingly on the ear in the pauses of the music on shore. Altogether the day was one of great interest and excitement, and though such a concourse of persons were assembled, and the strong old ale had had its usual curious effects on the equilibrium of mind and body, no disturbance occurred, and by midnight all was silent.

I have in some degree reversed the right order of things in describing these gay scenes before finishing my brief account

of the town itself, but such accounts being found in every guide-book, they may well seem of secondary importance.

The church of Aberystwith is a modern structure, and possesses no beauty, but good accommodation for its numerous congregation. Adjoining the burial ground is a pleasant garden, the sweet perfumes from which often greeted me while roaming near the gaily-hued enclosure. Gardens are generally rare and meagre near the sea-shore; but this seems guarded by some kind fairy, who sheds the softest tints and sweetest fragrance on her favourites.

Wild flowers, ‘the philanthropists of their race,’ are abundant on the hills around; delicate harebells, waving on their light stems; proud foxgloves; glowing purple heather; and golden gorse shine out in starry beauty from bank and moorland:—

‘And are they not the stars of earth? Doth not
Our memory of their bright and varied forms
Wind back to childhood’s days of guileless sport,
When these familiar friends of later years
A beauty and a mystery remained?
And were they not to infant eyes more dear
E’en than their starry kindred? For one glance
Of wondering love we lifted to the vault
Of the o’er-orbed sky, have we not bent
Full many a glance of pleased affection down
To the green field, starred over with its hosts
Of daisies, countless as the blades of grass
’Midst which they seem’d to look and laugh at us?’*

* From the *Romance of Nature, or the Flower Seasons Illustrated*, by L. A. Twamley. One of the most interesting and beautiful books ever published. The plates, which are carefully and exquisitely coloured, have the appearance of drawings.





THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

A fantastic looking building, half gothic castle, half Italian villa, stands between the church and the sea; it was built by the late Sir Uvedale Price, but is now used as a lodging-house. Ghost stories are becoming rare even in Cambria's mystic land, but this castle-house, as it is termed, is said to be patronized by a spiritual resident in the form of a 'White Lady,' who is, by some imaginative persons, supposed to occupy one of its octagon towers. I have very diligently perambulated about the lady's haunts, at all hours of the day, and when the dim twilight gave a supernatural colouring even to common-place personages, but my sea-side musings have never been spectrally discomposed, and so I cannot add the precious testimony of eyewitness-ship to this 'White Lady' romance.

The beach generally presents an amusing appearance to a stranger, and although I have been a performer in the scene, it affords me equal entertainment. There are occasionally found here valuable pebbles of agate, jasper, &c. and many small crystals; accordingly, every one who visits Aberystwith expects to carry away a world of wealth 'of his or her own picking up,' and this picking-up-fancy becomes a serious business. On propitious days there appears on the shining beach an army of treasure-seekers, each with a small basket to hold the jewels; and there they are, rank and file, from morn till dewy eve, with bending backs and downcast eyes! while hands, feet, parasols, camp-stools, and oyster-shells are enlisted into the service. Let any Aberystwith visiter gainsay it who will, this is *the* favourite amusement for all ages, sizes, sexes, and classes—from the peer to the postillion who brought him the last stage—and from the delicate invalid lady to the little barefooted Welsh wench up to her

knees in the surf. It becomes an inveterate habit; one would think some sea-sprite threw a spell over us so soon as our footsteps press the enchanted strand, for no one escapes the infliction—and lumbago, rheumatism, and other consequent ills too often follow the avaricious exploit. For *these* visitors, however, there is a speedy and luxurious cure in the excellent and commodious warm baths, of which there are several on the Terrace, and in other parts of the town; also a chalybeate spring at a short distance.

Nor is Aberystwith without the usual public amusements of a fashionable watering-place, for those whose health or inclination leads them to seek the gay as well as the picturesque; here are balls, races, theatricals, &c.; and to all who are fortunate in finding kind friends and pleasant acquaintance among the residents or visitors, this may well be selected as a summer retreat for successive years. The bathing is excellent; and the number of pleasure boats always employed, proves how much the sea-excursions in the neighbourhood are enjoyed. The excellent fishing in the Rheidol and the Ystwith, tempting to disciples of quaint, pleasant old Isaac Walton, calls forth many a merry party of anglers to the delicious vales of these winding rivers. It appears singular that the Ystwith gives the name to the town (*Aber-Ystwith*, the mouth of the Ystwith,) as the Rheidol flows *through* it, and only joins the Ystwith at some distance, when they both fall into the sea together. The town in this situation was called Aber-Rheidol about the time of our First Henry, but when the name was changed, is not correctly known: it was also called Llanbadarn Gaerog, or the fortified Llanbadarn, from its nearly adjoining that once great city.

Some delightful excursions may be made from Aberystwith, among the grand and romantic scenery of Cardigan's mountains and glens. First in beauty, as in popularity, is the oft-praised, but indiscribable spot, where the Devil's Bridge frowns over its sublime and perilous chasm. The road from Aberystwith to the Bridge is replete with beauty of varied character. On quitting the town, we ascend steep hills, wearisome alike to man and horse, till, from the summit, is gained a view of the lovely vale of the Rheidol, with its fantastic winding stream flowing in silvery, snake-like curves throughout, and 'the everlasting hills' on either side lifting their hoary summits to the sky; while in the inland distance 'hills above hills, and alps on alps arise,' with Plinlimmon's many-beaconed head, turbanned with clouds, high above them all, like the monarch of the mountain-realm that lies in proud subjection around his mighty throne.

Gradually the valley narrows as we recede from the sea, until, on abruptly turning round a singular conical rock, the strange and wondrously beautiful scene, which has so long alike baffled the descriptive pen and the mimic pencil, bursts in all its grandeur on the delighted eye. The glen of the Rheidol, narrowed to a ravine, down which a roaring cataract pours its inexhaustible waters, lies before the gazer—and the terrific chasm of the Mynach yawns beneath his feet at a dizzy depth below. It is a scene to be feasted on, trembled at, and dreamed of, sleeping and waking; but not to be pre-conceived, painted, or described. The bridge consists of two arches, one immediately over the other. The lower arch is of great antiquity, and supposed to have been built by the Monks of Ystrad Flur, or Strata Florida Abbey, but antiquarians are not agreed on this point, as tradition fixes the

erection of the bridge in 1087, and the Abbey of Strata Florida was not founded till 1164. Giraldus Cambrensis mentions having passed over it in 1188, when preaching the crusades with Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury. The wild and stupendous scenery surrounding this spot greatly enhances the terrific grandeur of the ravine, and no doubt had its share in the origin of the vulgar denomination it has received; all appearances both in art and nature, which were beyond the comprehension of the simple and superstitious people of past dark ages, were without hesitation attributed to 'his majesty of ebon wing;' and many are the grand and extraordinary scenes popularly resigned to his patronage.

Grand as is the view from the bridge itself, when the half-dizzy gazer looks down into the dread abyss,—yet he is then unable to form any adequate idea of the vastness, the gloomy magnificence of the scene, as seen from below. Passing over the bridge from the inn, and descending a steep and rather dangerous path to the right hand, the extraordinary chasm over which the arches are thrown is viewed to the greatest advantage. It appears a narrow and perpendicular fissure in a solid rock, one hundred and fourteen feet in height; the singular old arch spans it about twenty feet below the new one, and a double gloom is thus given to the naturally dark abyss, at the bottom of which the impetuous Mynach foams and boils along, roaring as if in wrath at the mighty rocks which gird in its chafed and rapid waters. The table-rock on which the adventurous Wanderer to this wondrous freak of nature alights, after his last descending leap, is nearly encircled by the thundering torrent, and so loud is the din, that two persons standing on the rock together can with great difficulty hear each other's voice. In truth it

It is a fearful scene ! The black and riven precipitous rock, which rears its form of darkness before me, seems to shut out all of calm and beauty which the world contains, and spreads its own region of wild desolation around. If a traveller have only time to descend one path at the Devil's Bridge, let him choose this. In many situations he may see cascades, but the extraordinary chasm at this place is one of nature's inexplicable freaks, and a single specimen is all she vouchsafes us. Although the depth of this fissure is one hundred and fourteen feet (at the least computation, and probably more) the width of the aperture is in some places not more than *fifteen inches* ; it is, therefore, evidently impossible that the river could be the original cause of the chasm, as supposed by some tourists ; though, its waters having found an outlet, they have no doubt continued to widen and deepen their confined channel.

After regaining the bridge, another hazardous path is descended on the opposite side, through a wood, and round an abrupt point of rock, to view the four falls of the Mynach, when it escapes from its imprisoning ravine, and rushes down to meet the Rheidol, which is seen falling in a magnificent cascade between two grand swelling hills in an opposite direction.

The third path, down which the guide conducts visitors, is formed by the side of the falls, and commands very beautiful views of them individually ; the first is twenty-four feet, the second fifty-six, the third eighteen, and the fourth, or grand cataract, one hundred and ten. In this admeasurement no allowance is made for the inclined direction of the river in many parts ; the total height, from the bridge to the level of the stream when it joins the Rheidol, is about five hundred

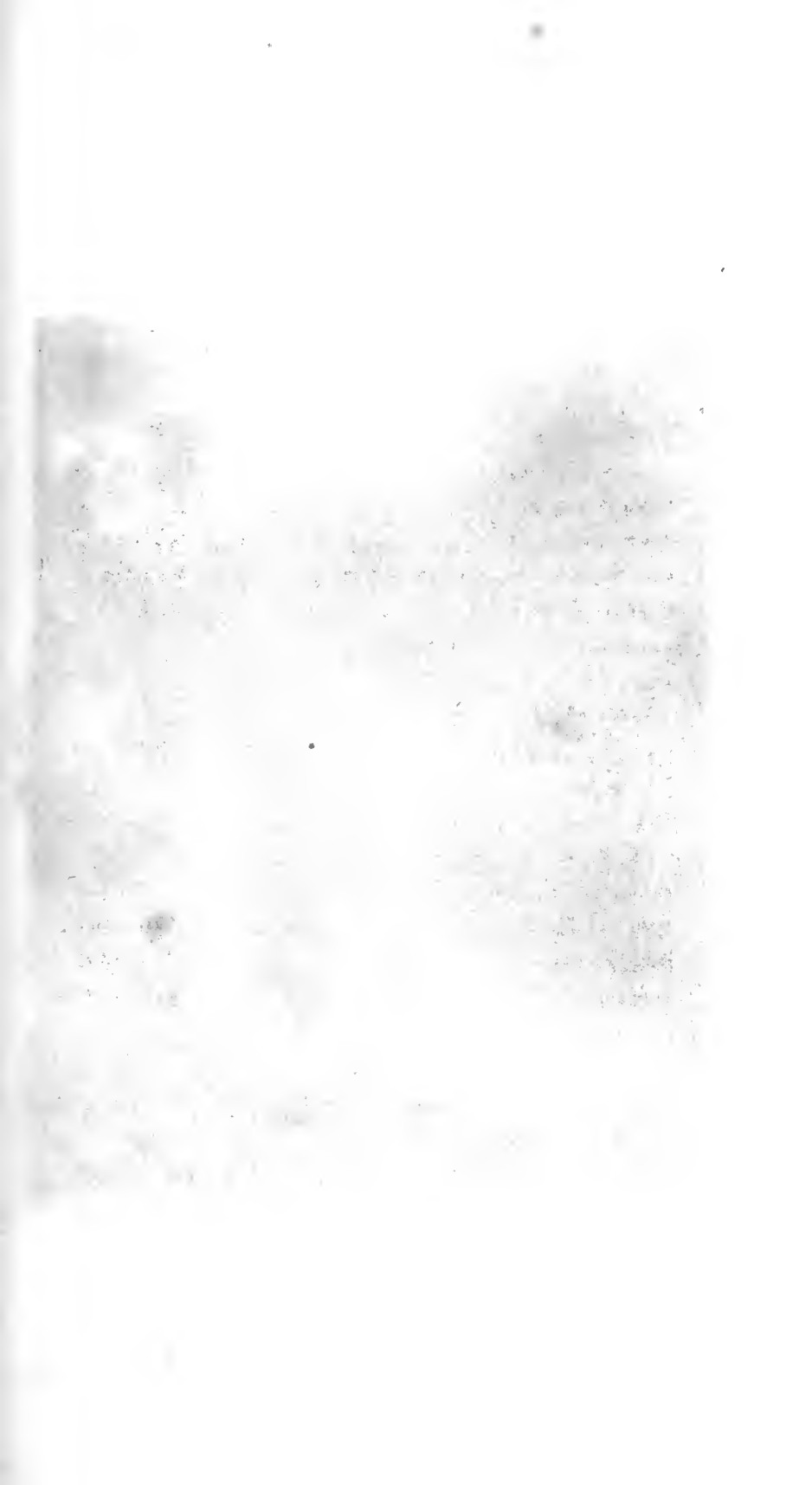
feet. The sides of the dingles are richly wooded, and the interlacing foliage of the trees sometimes almost embowers the cataract, while the stupendous hills that rise high on either side are decked with bright clusters of mountain-blossoms; heath and wild thyme shed a purple glow over the hoary crags, and the different yellow and white flowers gem the verdant carpet with 'treasures of silver and gold;' for the spray, incessantly flung up by the foaming waters, falls in a gentle shower around, 'making the ground one emerald.' As I sat contemplating the magnificent scene before me, where the last great plunge throws the water one hundred and ten feet down the rugged chasm, I felt how accurately descriptive are Byron's lines on the Falls of Terni; they echo the spirit-voices that we seem to hear around us in such a scene.

'The roar of waters!—from the headlong height
Velino cleaves the wave-worn precipice;
The fall of waters!—rapid as the light.
The flashing mass foams, shaking the abyss;
The hell of waters! where they howl and hiss
And boil in endless torture!'

After the fatigues of these ascents and descents from and to the 'Acherontic stream,' the comforts of the Hafod Arms Inn are right welcome; but I would add a word in passing, to hint that the worthy landlord might find the benefit of teaching the *rudiments* of civility to the waiters in his establishment; it is well for the Hafod Arms that no other house of public entertainment is yet opened in the neighbourhood.







CHAPTER II.

HAFOD—STRATA FLORIDA ABBEY—YSTRAD MEIRIG.

THEY love the walks where nature's track is seen,
And riot 'mid rent rocks and forests wild,
Huge preeipices, cataracts, and groves
Of venerable oak, impervious half
To Sol's bright beams, o'erhanging waterfalls,
And half admitting chequer'd rays to dance
Adown the silver Naiad's murmuring stream.

* * * * *

Here balmy air, and springs as ether clear,
Fresh downs, and limpid rills, and daisied meads,
Delight the eye, reanimate the heart,
And on the florid cheek emboss the rose
'Mid sweetest dimples and unfeigned smiles.
Here shepherd swains, attentive to their charge,
Distent o'er hillocks green, or mountains huge,
Mantled with purple heath.

Voyage of Life, by the Rev. David Lloyd.

THE usual custom being to visit Hafod from the Devil's Bridge, and I, like a systematic and orderly Wanderer, having followed the example of my predecessors in the vagrant line, my readers will be good enough to step into the carriage with me while I retrace my morning's drive to that former 'paradise of dainty devices.'

The road to Hafod lies through a wildly mountainous tract of country, at first overlooking the deep dingle where the foaming Mynach tears its angry way;—and then over the brow of a hill, commanding an extensive and richly varied prospect. At the summit of this hill, an arch is thrown across the road, and being seen for a considerable distance on either side, it forms a picturesque object in the landscape; though to a stranger it holds out a deceitful promise of some more interesting and ancient fabric than the mere ornamental whim of a neighbouring land-owner. From this arch the road descends somewhat steeply, and a turn to the right leads to a lodge, at which the grounds of Hafod are entered. Here the view becomes extremely beautiful; richly wooded hills rise around, leaving a valley of lawns and groves, through which the Ystwith takes its ever-varying course, now plunging down a rocky ravine in a sheet of white and glittering foam—now flowing darkly along, shadowed by the graceful branches of the Mountain-ash, and the delicate Birken spray, while the sturdy king of the woods, the massive-foliaged Oak, groups more heavily and richly with the glossy Spanish Chestnut, and the darksome Fir. A lovely ride along this lawny vale, at one graceful sweep brings the visiter in front of the mansion, the exterior of which is the only part that the present owner suffers the eyes of curious tourists to be edified by examining; and this, though sufficiently elegant for the residence of both the affluent and tasteful, certainly possesses none of the magical attributes which certain writers, whose pens seem to move on stilts, are ambitious to invest it with. The description of Hafod, so laboriously built by some Mr. Cumberland, I find quoted in every guide-book I open; of course it is considered the *ne plus ultra* of the sublime and beautiful;

and as my readers will look in vain for so dainty a paragraph in *my* homely composition, I cannot refuse them the advantage of perusing this choice specimen—

‘Wales and its borders, both North and South, abound at intervals with fine things: Piercefield has grounds of great magnificence, and wonderfully picturesque beauty; Downton Castle has a delicious woody vale, most tastefully managed; Llangollen is brilliant; the banks of the Conway savagely grand; Barmouth romantically rural; the great Pistyll Rhayader horribly wild; Rhayader Wennol gay, and gloriously irregular; but at Hafod I find the effects of all in one circle.’ &c. &c.

The grounds of Hafod are highly favoured by nature, in variety of form; and art has lent her improving hand so gracefully, and *naturally*, that we forget she has so much to claim in the beauty of Hafod: but its late proprietor, and we might almost say creator, well knew how to blend the wild and the cultivated in harmonious union. Colonel Johnes, the late lamented and excellent owner of this immense estate, planted nearly *three millions* of trees upon bare, heathery hills, where now rich hanging woods form so striking a contrast to the adjacent scenery. Under his fostering and unwearied care, the spot he selected to work his wizard-like change upon, became such, as in some measure to warrant even the extravagant praise bestowed on it; but now, the beauty is fast waning in the neglect and general absence of its present proprietor. The pleasant and well-kept walks have become quagmires, and where a garden once shed its many perfumes on the air, inviting the approach of wandering guests, now a wilderness of tall grass and rank dandelions fills the space. The beautiful cascades, the rocks,

the woods, and the gentle wild-flowers, still wear their wonted looks of grandeur and loveliness; but where the hand of man should give its aid, in maintaining the improvements of art, all is going to decay. I saw symptoms of an enlargement of the mansion, and hope improvement will not rest there. Large estates doubtless gratify the owner's pride, and pheasants and hares are pleasant things to have his woods tenanted by; but, methinks, the first consideration should be the employment and welfare of the *poor* around; and this was so kindly, so constantly promoted by the late Colonel Johnes and his family, that the change must to them be a severe one. We will wish Hafod 'good-morrow kindly'—and hope to see it soon in better condition.

In Cwm Ystwith, a valley separated from Hafod by a mountain ridge, are some valuable lead mines, belonging to the Earl of Lisburne; but the impracticable appearance of the entrance to their subterranean labyrinths, compelled me to disappoint the curiosity I generally gratify by a 'voyage to the interior.' The heaps of dark grey ore lying all around, the damp, dirty attire of the miners, and the herbless desolation of the scene, may well be described as forming a startling contrast to the rich, verdant, and beautiful grounds so near; for a mile's ride transports us at once from one of the dreariest spots imaginable, to beauty and cultivation.

The inducements for inland excursions from Aberystwith are not very numerous, but among the places renowned in olden times to which I had long resolved on bending my steps while sojourning in the vicinity, was the Abbey of Strata Florida, little of which now remains.

Divers are the kinds of vehicles to be obtained for such

excursions, and the one destined for my conveyance on this occasion was the worst possible specimen of the Irish jaunting-car kind. However, no way disposed to make troubles of trifles, the incessant jolting and thumping was borne very philosophically in consideration of the lovely scenes it conveyed me to.

Passing out of Aberystwith to the south, I traversed a richly wooded district, interspersed with corn fields smiling in their golden wealth, and whitewashed cottages peeping contentedly from the bosky dells or broomy braes around. The hedges were decked with wreaths and clusters of luscious woodbines, greeting me kindly with their sweet odour; and foxgloves, mallows, and the delicate, dancing harebells, enamelling the banks beneath the canopy of honeysuckles, made the road seem a pleasant garden walk.

‘All things rejoiced beneath the sun; the weeds,
The meadows, and the cornfields, and the reeds,
The willow leaves that glanced in the light breeze,
And the firm foliage of the larger trees.’

A few miles from Aberystwith, I gained a fine view of Nanteos park, the seat of Colonel Powell. Continuing my ride through woods, and pretty English-looking scenery for a while, I descended to the Vale of the Ystwith, a scene of great beauty. The river, winding in Wye-like curves and horse-shoe bends, occupies the middle of the flat, and on either side the banks, gradually rising, are embroidered as it were, with fields, woods, gardens, and cottages with their light blue peat smoke rising gracefully ‘above the green elms,’ while mountains, piled one on another, complete the picture. Beyond, where the valley narrows, is Crosswood, the seat of the Earl of Lisburne, surrounded with plan-

tations, some of which skirt the Ystwith, and overhang its rocky and deep bed, which is here crossed by an elegant wooden bridge, rustic-looking, yet perfectly commodious, qualities not often united. Wending still onwards, I crossed the Ystwith at the bridge of Llanavan, a village, (if such it can be called) consisting of a few wretched cabins; and then up a high hill I pursued my weary way. Soon after gaining comparatively level ground, in passing through a stream which crossed the road to a mill, I fancied I heard sounds like falling water, and immediately stopped my charioteer while I investigated matters. Quitting the road, and descending a rugged pathway on the right of it, I soon came in view of a great slanting slate rock, down which the mill-stream falls in one grand, unbroken cascade, into a dark deep pool, whence it gurgles quietly along, under a turfy bank, to a second mill at a short distance, built below the level of the water, which, after turning the wheel, is flung off in a beautiful cascade, and falling into a wooded ravine, goes plunging down the rocks to join the main stream in the glen; for this busy working streamlet is but a branch of the larger body of water, which is guiltless of application to useful purposes. From the turf-bank already mentioned, I could see indistinctly that a vast glen lay far below, and could hear the sound of many waters, echoed by the precipitous rocks around. The driver having summoned one of the bare-footed urchins from a neighbouring cabin to guide me, I accompanied him through the pathless underwood and tangled herbage which skirted the sides of the ravine, and at length found myself in the bed of the river, standing on slippery fragments of rock, round which the waters foamed and boiled in loud roaring rapids. Before, beside, all around

me, as it seemed, mountain-torrents rushed down the immense wall of rock, which here closes the glen in a kind of narrow amphitheatre, and is richly adorned, though not wholly clothed, with wood. Five distinct streams were in view at once, all leaping from a dizzy height above me, and plunging down in infinite variety of forms; some, falling by places over the bare shelves of rock, spread out in a broad clear sheet of water; others, half-hidden by the verdant, dewy foliage of the trees, sprang but partially into sight, scattering afar their feathery foam, like streams of light amid the gloom of this darksome glen. The roar of the falling water in its rocky and confined basin, reverberated by the high cliffs that wall it in on three sides, is deafening; and after remaining in this damp and perilous position, until both eyes and ears besought a respite in quieter scenes, I climbed once more into upper air, and found a large assembly of 'Natives' collected to see the strange being who had so unceremoniously introduced himself to a scene unsought and nearly unknown in the neighbourhood it adorns. The miller popped his white face out at his mill-door, with as suspicious a glance as if he feared my design was to elope with the objects of my admiration instanter, and even the auld wives suspended the swift evolutions of the knitting-pins, in wonder at my invasion; so little sought is this beautiful spot, though only the same distance from Aberystwith, as the Devil's Bridge, to which people flock by scores. Not that I mean to imply any *comparison* of the two scenes—they are essentially different in character—but surely, when one is so universally visited, *some* lovers of the grand and the beautiful in nature might add the other to their list of Cardiganshire pilgrimages. When at the place, I could not distinctly understand the

name given it by the bare-legged guide, but have since learned that the dell is called Pwll Caradoc, i. e. Caradoc's or Caractacus's Pool, a Welsh prince of that name, having fallen over the precipice, and been killed. Tradition has two versions of the story; one says that the prince was hunting and leaped into the terrific chasm accidentally, while in pursuit of the quarry; the other says that he 'rushed over'—but as I am unwilling to suspect the prince of any thing like *felo de se*, I give credence to the former supposition.

This fall is not only unsought by visitors, but is not even named by any guide-book or tour which I have yet seen; and I have consulted many for the purpose of finding if its history or existence was known to the authors.

The water of this, and most other mountain streams in the vicinity, is of a dark brown colour, though as clear as crystal. Even the foam of a large body of it is yellow, instead of white; this singular appearance is caused by the turbaries through which the streams flow, and in which many of them rise. The Rheidol, Ystwyth, Mynach, Teivy, all I have observed here, wear the russet colour.

Proceeding onwards, through many streams, (whose course, crossing the road, with no other bridge than a tree and a rail for foot passengers, must render travelling in rainy and flood seasons highly dangerous here,) I passed the village of Pont Rhyvendigaid, *Anglice*, the Blessed or Holy ford, so called by the good monks of the olden time; a substantial bridge is now the commodious substitute for the ancient ford, and over it is passed the Teivy, in which river, as Fluellyn would say, 'there be good salmons.' Ystrad Fflur is an extensive valley of excellent meadow land, very retiredly situated, and chiefly remarkable now for the ruins of its once grand and richly

endowed Monastery, called by the Welsh, Mynachlog Ystrad Fflur, the Abbey of the blooming or fertile plain, now strangely Latinized into Strata Florida. According to Dugdale, the edifice of which we now see the remains, was built by the Abbot, in the year 1294, but the structure raised by Rhys ap Gruffydd stood about two miles distant, to the south-west, upon a plain near the river Fflur, where an old building, now used as a barn, is called Hên Monachlog, the Old Abbey.

Leland says the Abbey was a Cistercian-house, founded by Gruffydd ap Rhys and Meredith his brother. Camden mentions it as an establishment of Cluniacs, founded by Rhys ap Tewdwr, in the time of William the Conqueror. ‘Who shall decide when doctors disagree?’ Certain it is that the Abbey was immensely rich, being valued at the Dissolution at upwards of one thousand two hundred pounds; and was the chief repository of whatever was learned or civilised in former turbulent times. Its hospitals and cells were established in every direction, and it divided with the Abbey of Conway the honourable charge of depositing and carrying on the records of the Principality.

To the Monks of Strata Florida we are chiefly indebted for the accurate History of Wales, from the year 1157, till the final defeat and death of the last Llewellyn, at which period these reverend fathers were the bearers of their prince’s remonstrance, and interceded with the Archbishops of York and Canterbury for their good offices in relieving him from the insults and oppressions of the Marchers.

The earliest and most authentic account we have of the Kings of Britain, in the form of a regular history, is a MS. in the British, or American language, called Brut y

Brenhinoedd, brought here from Bretagne in France, by Gualter, Archdeacon of Oxford, about the year 1100. Geoffrey of Monmouth's History is a free translation of this, though some moderns have doubted the authenticity, and even the existence, of the original, accusing Geoffrey of attempting to impose his own fables on the world as a genuine portion of British history. But however fabulous his book may appear to those unacquainted with the nature of the times on which it treats, there certainly is an ancient copy still extant, called *Brut y Brenhinoedd*, preserved in the library of Mr. Davies, of Lanerch, Denbighshire.* This MS. includes the History of Wales to the year 700; from this period Caradoc of Llan-carvan took it up, and faithfully continued it from the most authentic documents to the year 1157. Several copies of Caradoc were deposited in different archives, and, amongst others, in those of Ystrad Fflur. The monks of this house carefully recorded every memorable event subsequent to that period, till the fatal defeat of the last prince of British blood who was able to assert the independence of his country, A.D. 1282.

This Abbey seems to have been a grand Mausoleum for the royal and noble in Wales, many princes and renowned persons having been here interred; but to *me* its cemetery gains most interest from being the last resting-place of the celebrated Welsh poet, Daffydd ap Gwylim, many of whose compositions are replete with grace, fancy, and a most keen and satirical spirit. So far we have looked only at the past: the present appearance of this once mighty edifice, serves as a humiliating lesson to human pride and power. The glory

* Evans.

of by-gone days has passed away;—the princely Abbey has mouldered into dust, and been destroyed piecemeal for the sake of its materials, with which many a squalid cabin in the neighbourhood has been created. In a slovenly and wilderness-like garden, adjoining the present churchyard, stands a circular gateway of extreme beauty, in three different ‘Guides’ it is termed severally, Gothic, Saxon, and Norman;* *circular* it certainly is, and circular only will I call it. The carving consists of six simple flutings, one within another, cut in such fine relief that at a short distance it has the appearance of an arcade; over the centre of the arch is a carved stone, apparently representing a double Crozier-head. In the wall adjoining this gateway, a pointed window still remains, nearly overgrown with ivy and a variety of small shrubs which have taken root in the crumbling stone. A fine elder bush, gay and fragrant with its large clusters of delicate flowers, occupies the inner space of the beautiful archway, silently telling of the transitory nature of all man’s laborious work, compared with the everlasting, ever-renewed vigour and freshness of Nature. Some remarkably large box trees grow opposite the arch, and very close to it; rendering probable my surmise, that this was the garden front of the Abbey, where these ancient trees perhaps decorated the ‘pleasance’ of the reverend Brotherhood. At some fifty or sixty paces distant from this spot stands a fragment of masonry, like the corner part of some large building, about forty feet high, composed of the common slate-rock of the country, strongly, though somewhat rudely, put together. And these scattered remains are all that time has left to tell us of this once

* Malkin, Nicholson, Evans.

magnificent Abbey! As I gazed on its ruined fragments, fancy, with her airy spells, began to array the fallen edifice in its former might and glory:—

‘I could not dream!—

And yet a visionary band arose,
‘Mid solemn music’s thrilling swell and close,
A silent, shadowy train; the taper’s gleam
Fitfully o’er monastic forms was shed,
O’er mitred abbot, and the lengthen’d line
Of dark-cowl’d monks that bent around the shrine,
Still, calm, and voiceless as the slumb’ring dead.
They passed away—that strange and solemn train:
The pealing music murmured through the trees,
Breathing its faint farewell upon the breeze,
And to its distant home returned again.
They passed away—the sunbeams brightly shone,
And o’er me smiled the cloudless, azure sky,
Where late the fretted roof’s proud canopy
Rose o’er the torch-lit crowd. I was alone;—
Where late the golden censers high had flung
Their fragrant clouds around the imaged throne,
The wall-flower shed its perfume, as it clung
And waved in wild luxuriance o’er the stone
Chafed by the storms of years; an emblematic bloom,
An halo-coronal of light o’er grandeur’s tomb.
Around me all was calm and still; the wind,
Even that ‘charter’d brawler,’ seemed to feel
A strange, unwonted awe, and strove to steal
With gentler voice amid the hills that shrined
A scene so tranquil.’

So important a place was this in olden times, that Llewellyn ap Jorwerth, in 1237, invited the Lords and Barons of Wales to Ystrad Fflur, and required from them the oaths of fidelity

and allegiance to his son David. Those who now visit the spot, in its dismantled and ruinous desolation, will scarcely believe that the whole country round could furnish accommodation for such a company, or that this could be the theatre of ceremonies such as are solemnized with us under the awful roof of Westminster. The situation of this Abbey well illustrates the proverbial good taste of the monks, who generally prevailed with their founder to place them in the best meadow land of a district, under the protection of mountains not far distant, and above all things, on the banks of a fresh and rapid stream, abounding in *fast-day* delicacies.

The present church, a small, neat building, erected out of the ruins of its grand predecessor, stands in a burying ground which is still spacious, though occupying but a small portion of the original cemetery. A few very ancient, dying Yew trees add a melancholy beauty to the scene. Under one of them tradition says that Davydd ap Gwylim lies interred. When the Druidical or Bardic hierarchy began to decline in Britain, it was succeeded by the Hermitical, and Monastical Institutions, which also became the nurseries of learning, and the grand repositories of music, poetry, British bards, and records, until the reign of Henry VIII, who abolished the monasteries. All the Abbeys appear to have retained bards and minstrels of their own; Davydd ap Gwylim is said to have been the bard of Ystrad Fflur, and Guttyn Owen, the historian and herald-bard to that abbey. Sooth to say, Davydd seems, by the style and character of his numerous poems, to have been a most unfit person to hold office in any *holy* establishment, unless the monks something resembled in moral discipline the jolly ‘Friar of orders gray’ of the old song; for the greater part of his effusions are celebrations of his mis-

tress's beauty, the fair Morvudd, who being wedded against her will to a humpbacked old churl, Davydd found means to carry her off twice from her husband, and thereby incurred much disgrace. He also, in a witty dialogue-poem, supposed to be spoken by himself and a friar, severely ridicules much that appertained to the sacred calling, which offences, added to the levity, if not licentiousness of his life, make the circumstance of his being an Abbey-bard paradoxical, if not doubtful.

The poetry of Davydd ap Gwylim is considered the purest standard of the Welsh language; and from his poems the modern literary dialect has been chiefly formed.*

Returning to Pont Rhyvendigaid, I halted at the small Inn, where a rampant red Lion swings and creaks its invitation to man and beast. Ushered into the 'best parlour,' I amused myself by observing the multifarious decorations of this state apartment. Around the walls hung various Scripture subjects, most woefully caricatured by the artist—such as the Prodigal Son in a red hunting jacket, and buckskin unmentionables; the Queen of Sheba in a hoop of courtly circumference; and King Solomon rejoicing in the full-blown glories of a cauliflower wig, and *blue* stockings with pink clocks! The mantle-piece was decorated with wax and crockery-ware effigies of the same class, and the grate's costume was truly original; a large sheet of paper hung before it, on which were stitched in a most accidental-looking style, a number of *hearts*, all cut out of different coloured calicos and prints;—red, blue, yellow, green; striped, spotted, starred and sprigged were these mystic emblems; but what they could *mean*, remains an enigma. Carefully pinned to a cur-

* Malkin.

tain hung a very knowing lace cap, with borders of that extraordinary width and abundance seen only among the Welsh belles, and most beautifully ‘got up,’ as the ladies say. On a corner table, too, lay a hat, which, by its gloss, newness, and clever shape, evidently intended to invite the cap to church the following day (Sunday), and the entrance of a tight, blooming, dark-eyed, and sprightly-looking Welsh girl with my intended repast, soon enabled my calculating curiosity to supply a face worthy of the becoming national costume. I *like* the dress of the bonny Welsh lassies, and trust they will be long in yielding to the insipid innovations of modern millinery. They would resign their piquant black hats with no little reluctance, did they know how flat and unbecoming the flippant silk bonnets, displayed by some of them, look in comparison. The hat is not worn by the peasantry alone, for I have seen not a few spruce beavers accompanied by rich silk dresses, fashionable kerchiefs, and silk stockings. While sojourning at Aberystwith, I greatly enjoyed seeing the farmer’s comely wives and pretty daughters riding to market with their sacks of corn over the saddle, for here the women sell small quantities of grain at market, and with the produce purchase the various articles required for domestic use, which are stowed in the corn-sack on their return; and often have my prying eyes detected the form of a new tea-pot, or the circumference of a frying-pan, in these bags of all-work.

In returning from Pont Rhyvendigaid, I repassed the village of Ystrad Meirig, celebrated for its excellent grammar school, called the Welsh College. Many most eminent men, both of past and present times, have received the greater portion of their education at this school; although, from its appearance now, I fear its fame is on the decline.

The situation of Ystrad Meirig, though not possessed of that pre-eminent grandeur and beauty which distinguish so many spots in Cardiganshire, is one of much interest, and the immediate neighbourhood is partially wooded, and abounds with fine craggy mountains and romantic cwms. The Castle of Ystrad Meirig, now among the by-gones of the land, was formerly an important out-post to Aberystwith, built, like that larger fortress, by the Norman adventurer Gilbert de Strongbow, and affording timely succour to the usurping party in the day of danger, when Prince Gruffydd ap Rhys was on the point of retrieving the rights of the natives. The ancient historians are of opinion that Rhys would have succeeded, had he not committed the dreadful sacrilege of appropriating to the use of his army some cattle taken from the holy enclosures of the great St. Padarn's Sanctuary. Surely these reverend Fathers visited the sins of their moss-trooping Princes rather heavily, to make the freedom of the kingdom, or at least an important victory over the usurping powers, the forfeit of a few fat beeves and muttons. Florence, of Worcester, mentions Gruffydd ap Rhys to have died by the deceitful practise of his wife. In 1137, on the accession of Owain Gwyneth to the supremacy of Wales, his first exploit was to overthrow the enemy's stronghold at Ystrad Meirig. In 1150, Rhys ap Gruffydd, having lost many of his men at the siege of Llanrhysted, betook himself to this place, where he re-fortified and manned the Castle. It was of considerable importance in all the subsequent wars, till in the year 1208 it was destroyed by its owner, that it might not fall into the hands of Llewellyn ap Iorwerth. After this period it does not appear to be mentioned in history.

The southern part of Cardiganshire is chiefly composed of wide-spreading mountains, vast, grand, and dreary, with a very scanty population. The banks of the rivers, as in every instance, afford the finest scenery, and most fertile land; the Teivy will well reward the wanderer for the time and toil of a lengthened pilgrimage. Drayton greatly expatiates on the beauties and qualifications of this river as well as of her tributary and neighbouring streams.

‘Sith I must stem thy stream, clear Teivy, yet before
 The Muse vouchsafe to seize the Cardiganian shore
 She of thy source will sing in all the Cambrian coast;
 Which of thy castors once, but now canst only boast
 Thy salmons, of all floods most plentiful in thee.
 Then Teivy cometh down from her capacious lin
 ’Twixt Mirk and Brenny led, two handmaids that do stay
 Their mistress, as in state she goes upon her way:
 Which when Llanbeder sees, her wondrously she likes;
 Whose untamed bosom so the beauteous Teivy strikes,
 As that the forest fain would have her there abide.
 Mild Mathern then the next, doth Teivy overtake:
 Which instantly again by Dittor is supply’d.
 Then Keach and Kerry help, ’twixt which, on either side,
 To Cardigan she comes, the sovereign of the shire.’

Drayton next gives a long and copious description of the nature and habits of the beaver, this animal having formerly been abundant in the Teivy, though centuries have now passed since its extermination. Still, its former existence in this neighbourhood is amply proved by the laws of Howel Dda, the authenticity of which is unquestioned; the price of a beaver’s skin is there set down, and in different parts of Wales are ponds and lakes which have borne the name of beaver’s pools from time immemorial. It is evident that

beavers existed here in the time of Giraldus, whose account of their manner of constructing their cabins is too accurate to have been compiled from hearsay or tradition, and 'he is no contemptible authority, though a politic conformity to the tastes of his readers might, perhaps, induce him, in some instances, rather to consider what they would admire, than his own accuracy. Had the assertion related to anything miraculous, or anything involving the interests of the *Church* or the *Crusade*, we might reasonably suspect him of an undue inclination; but, in the present case, he had some reputation to support as a topographer, and no interest to warp him as a Churchman.'

The goats in the present day seem to have met the fate of the wolves and beavers of past eras, it being a most rare event to see one of these animals in a wild state, even among the mountain-retreats of Cambria; an extirpation I much regret, both for their beauty, nationality, and usefulness to the peasantry. But the poor goats offend the owners of newly-springing plantations, by their penchant for nice young sprouts and leaves of trees, as a little variety in their diet of whin and heather, and their native haunts are now occupied by the far less picturesque but more harmless sheep, which so far emulate the athletic accomplishments of their predecessors, that they leap from crag to crag, with their dirty, torn, neglected fleeces dangling in strange and ludicrous disorder about them, with as much agility as their bearded relatives. I have frequently seen the mountain sheep trailing after them their rugged coats in a train of a yard or two in length, and heartily abused the careless indolence of their owners, while I pitied the miserable plight of the poor branble shorn animals.

On a mountain, two miles north-east of Strata Florida, are five lakes, of which Llyn Teivy is the principal. It is said to be unfathomable, and is encompassed by a high and perpendicular ridge, which at once feeds and confines its everlasting waters. It has been by some travellers supposed to be a crater, but the stones around bear no marks of volcanic action. Leland, in his quaint way, says—‘of al the pooles, none stondeth in so rokky and stony soile as Tyve doth, that hath withyn hym many stonis. The ground al about Tyve, and a great mile of towards Stratfler is horrible, with the sight of bare stonis, as cregeryri mountaines be. Llin Tyve is fed fro hyer places with a little broket, and issueth out again by a smaulle gut. Ther is in it veri good troutes and elys, and no other fisch.’*

This group of lakes forms one of the chief natural curiosities of this rugged district. On leaving Llyn Teivy, a few minutes’ walk attains the summit of the mountain, and a view of four more lakes, each within a few yards of the other. The largest cannot be much less in circumference than Llyn Teivy, and is of a different form, being narrow in the middle. The smallest is circular, occupying the highest ground, and in appearance much like a crater; its circumference is about three quarters of a mile. These lakes are all said to be fathomless, and their extraordinary effect is much heightened by the strong degree of agitation to which they are subjected by their exposure;—the scene, though totally desolate, is very grand.

* The Teivy is the small stream which issues from the lake, afterwards swelling to an important river.

This is the highest ground in Cardiganshire, and the prospect most extensive; but the cluster of mountains, on the most elevated of which are the lakes, reaches so far, as entirely to obscure the vales between the near and distant hills: all is wild and rugged, with Plinlimmon and Cader Idris rearing their lofty heads in the north. The prospect on the south-west extends to the high grounds about Cardigan, which appear distinctly, and beyond those to the sea, which is less clearly defined.

Between Pont Rhyvendigaid and Castle Inon, is Llyn Vatheg Cringlâs, about a mile in circumference, of a beautiful oblong form; this lake is said to occupy the site of the ancient city of Tregaron, which is popularly believed to have been ‘swallowed up’ in some convulsion of Nature. That such catastrophes have occurred, we have ample proofs; but, according to Welsh tradition, almost every pool has a ruined city beneath its waters. Llyn Savaddan, or Brecknock-mere, in the county of Brecon, is by some antiquaries imagined to cover the ancient city of Loventium; and the circumstance of the old high roads all tending to that spot seems to render probable the supposition: but granting this to be the case, it appears more than likely that the tradition of an ingulfed city has become associated with other places in which no ground for the belief ever existed, in the same manner that we find some of our old English legends related in precisely the same terms in celebration of places wide apart.

The chain of hills in this neighbourhood runs without a single break from Llanbeder to Bishop’s Castle in Shropshire, a space of about sixty miles. It might be traversed on horseback almost without the interruption of a single gate or fence, and probably without seeing a human being.

Mr. Malkin gives the following anecdote, which he observes ‘will serve to illustrate in a more lively manner, perhaps, than any formal detail, the nature and condition of this country.’ A person who was endeavouring to sell a considerable estate by auction, after having explained the value of the property, the present rents, and future capacity for improvements, thus addressed the company: ‘And, gentlemen, there are ten thousand acres lying ———, not mentioned in the particulars of the estate, which will be thrown into the bargain to the purchaser.’

The old Roman town of Loventium, above-mentioned, is, by those who discredit the story of its ingulfment, supposed to have been situated on the north-west bank of the Teivy, at a place now called Llanio isaf, where many fragments of Roman pottery, coins, and inscribed stones have from time to time been ploughed up. On one of these stones, built into the wall of a cottage, is an inscription signifying that a cohort of the second legion of Augustus was stationed there, and built a part of the walls of this city. This stood on the *Via occidentalis*, the great western road from Maridunum or Caernarthen to Penallt near Machynleth. Some call this road Sarn Helen, believing it to be a portion of the great military way which appears in different parts of Merioneth, Caernarvon, and Cardigan, called Sarn Helen, or Helen’s Way, the work of Helen, wife of the Emperor Maximus. Wherever the word ‘Sarn’ occurs, we may find vestiges of a Roman road, and one may be traced leading from Llanio towards Llandovery in its way to Brecon and Gloucester. It runs in an easterly direction to Llanvair mountain, which it leaves to the left, and there takes a south-west track to the church of Llanyerwys in Caermarthenshire.

It may afterwards be distinguished in two places near the little river Twrch, in the valley, and it afterwards leads through Cairo, where are some old mine works. Hence it goes to Llanvair ar y Bryn, near Llandovery, then to Y Gaer, near Brecon, and so on to Gloucester.

On the high lands in this neighbourhood are numerous tumuli and cist-vaens. In the parish of Cellan is a large circular moated tumulus, on the summit of which is an immense stone, or rather rock, eleven yards in diameter, called Llêch Cynon. On the mountain to the north of the river Frwd are two cist-vaens called 'beddau' or graves, and on the mountain on the south are two more, one of which is called Bedd y vorwyn, or the Virgin's grave. Sir S. Meyrick had these opened; their form was oblong, consisting of four stones, and in the centre a little tumulus of earth and stones. After clearing this away, there appeared a stratum of gravel, then a layer of sand, and under that burnt ashes of bones and wood lying on a bed of clay, which had been placed upon the rock. The depth of each was about three feet, and from two to four feet long. A very great number of the Carnau or Carneddau may be seen on the mountains in this parish; but two extremely large ones upon a very high mountain near the road leading from Llanvair to Llanyerwys are most conspicuous. These, and another called Fair Carnau, consist of heaps of large stones, in all probability the graves of war-like chiefs who fell near the spot. Other great stones, placed on adjacent mountains, have most likely been erected in commemoration of a victory. Near the road leading to Llanyerwys are the remains of a Druidical structure, several of the huge stones formerly belonging to it lie scattered around. Two ancient entrenchments, one circular, the other oval, lie

in the vicinity, with numerous *earnedldau*. Few districts present more of interest for the research and reflection of the antiquary than the now dreary and almost untrodden wilds of South Cardigan; formerly—as the gigantic remains of other days fully attest—the scenes of priestly power, royal magnificence, and all the ‘pomp and circumstance’ of dazzling, desolating war.

CHAPTER III.

WELSH COTTAGES—WEDDINGS—MINES.

THOUGH poor the peasant's hut, his feasts though small,
He finds his little lot the lot of all ;
Sees no contiguous palace rear its head,
To shame the meanness of his humble shed ;
No costly lord the sumptuous banquet deal,
To make him loathe his vegetable meal.

Goldsmith.

IF this were an age of black-art and gramoury instead of enlightenment and steam, and the wandering traveller likely to be whisked from place to place by the powers of enchantment instead of the more straight-forward aid of railroads and stage-coaches, we might well imagine the amazement of some economical, orderly English farmer on being suddenly introduced to the scenes of wild, uncultivated mountain-land, which the Rambler in Wales is ever familiar with. But not even the change in the general aspect of the country would astonish him so much as the squalid misery and dirt of the cottages, or rather cabins, of the peasantry. They may be placed on an equality with the worst specimens of Irish habitations, at least very many of them.

In the district I am now describing, (Cardiganshire,) the dark slate rock of the mountains furnishes a good material for the walls of these hovels, and of such they are mostly built, with apertures of the smallest possible dimensions for windows, which may or may not be supplied with a pane or two of green glass, but if they are, they are permanently fastened up, an opening window not being found in a cot of this degree, and the accumulation of dirt renders them nearly useless in admitting light. The floor, either mud or rough slate pavement, is generally the abiding-place of as many pigs, ducks, and sheep-dogs as the owners possess, all lying at ease, or walking freely in and out;—pigs and children, be it understood, partaking the comfort of the hearth, and nestling in affectionate companionship among the heaps of unswept ashes that lie around the turf-fire,—the smoke from which always declines going up the chimney, when there *is* one; for these things, deemed necessary with us, are here quite matters of taste, some cabins being decorated with a low, wattle appendage to the gable, while others have only a hole in that quarter which serves to let in the wind and rain, without letting out the smoke, which invariably makes its exit by the door; and in passing through a ‘village’ of these cottages, the vapour from opposite doors rises into an ærial archway, beneath which the uninitiated traveller coughs and grumbles along. The wattled chimneys I have mentioned, are sometimes truly ludicrous in their position; no doubt they are originally as erect as the rest of the building, but their general condition is such as to remind one of opera-dancers, striving to preserve their equilibrium in most extraordinary deviations from the perpendicular. Some times, fairly twisted round by the wind, they stick in the

roof by one peg of the basket-work, and look very like a *pirouette*; at others they may be seen lifted from their proper place, and seeming in the act of a *coupé*, and so happily are things managed, that opposite or next-door neighbours nod and *set* to each other with all the friendliness imaginable, seeming ready to *change sides* the first opportunity. Our travellers in Ireland exclaim in no measured terms on the peculiar horror of dunghills beside the cabins, but if they will step into a few Welsh villages they will find the nuisance is not wholly confined to the other side of the channel, for here the space in front of the cottage is generally occupied by a tumbling pigsty, (which the pig does *not* reside in,) a rick of peat, heaped against the dwelling, and the other fragrant accompaniment for the regalement of olfactory nerves, nearly blocking up the approach to the door; while a stagnant puddle is seldom far off, in which the ducks, pigs, and children may squatter together. Yet amid all this filth and, as *we* consider, misery, the female part of the cottagers are as spruce in their national costume on Sundays and holidays, and as proud of their assortment of crockery-ware, of which an unnecessary number of jugs forms an indispensable part, as if surrounded with all the more substantial comforts of life. To look at the habitations one would marvel how a clean mob-cap, or a decent coat, could belong to people so apparently lost to all notion of comfort and neatness. Their cheerfulness and content under privations that would not be endured by an English labourer, while it surprises, almost provokes us, as seeming to place a formidable bar in the way of future improvement. Flummery, buttermilk, and coarse barley bread, form much of their food; I have often seen the labourers of respectable farmers dining out of a bowl of flum-

mery, (a sour jelly, made from oat husks,) with such thankful content, as made the remembered fare of an English farm kitchen seem absolutely sumptuous by the contrast; and I have sometimes thought that a temporary residence among these cheerful, hard-feeding mountaineers might be a salutary lesson to some of the croaking consumers of beef, bacon, pudding, and ale, in England. Far be it from me to assert, that abstinence from the last-mentioned indulgence forms a general part of the South Cambrian character; I would that I could say so with truth, but the ancestral beverage of *cwrw* is a thing anciently and well beloved.

Weddings, generally the scenes of much mirth and was-sailing among the rustic population, are here accompanied by some singular customs, which, though not so universally practised as in former years, deserve mention, as they are far from becoming obsolete. The bidding, as it is termed, takes place about a week before the day of ceremony, the bans having been published as in England. The bidder, or official inviter of the guests, goes from house to house with a long pole, with ribbons flying at the end of it, and standing in the middle of the floor, repeats a long lesson with great formality, enumerating the various preparations, and requesting the attendance of the family he has called upon. The following is an old form of invitation, read by the bidder in Llanbadarn, some years since—literally translated:—
‘The intention of the bidder is this; with kindness and amity, with decency and liberality, for Enion Owain and Llio Elys, he invites you to come with your good-will on the plate; bring current money; a shilling, or two, or three, or four, or five; with cheese and butter. We invite the husband and wife, and children, and men-servants, from the greatest

to the least. Come there early, you shall have victuals freely, and drink cheap, stools to sit on, and fish if we can catch them ; but if not, hold us excusable ; and they will attend on you when you call on them, in return.'

Saturday is fixed as the day of marriage, and Friday is allotted to bring home the furniture of the woman, generally an oak chest, a feather bed, clothes and crockery. The man provides a bedstead, table, dresser, and chairs. The evening is employed in receiving presents of money, cheese, and butter, at the man's house, from his friends, and at the woman's house from her friends ; this is called *purse and girdle*, an ancient British custom. All the presents are set down on paper, and when demanded they are to be returned. On Saturday, the friends of the man come on horseback to his house, to the number of fifty or a hundred, eating and drinking at his cost, making their presents, and repaying those made at their weddings. Ten or twenty of the best mounted then accompany the bridegroom to the house of his intended, to demand her of her friends, who, with the lady, appear as uncomplying as possible, and much Welsh poetry is employed by way of argument, one party being within the house, and the other without, abusing each other heartily, in language something more sonorous than 'choice Italian.'—Formal orations are delivered by some of the outdoor party, and replied to by others appointed to conduct this nuptial negotiation. At length the father appears, admitting and welcoming his guests ; they alight, take refreshment, and proceed to church. The girl mounts behind her father, mother, or friend, upon the swiftest horse they can procure, and gallops off with the intended husband, and all the wedding guests riding after in full chase. 'Over the hills and

far away' go these bride-hunters, till the girl or her steed grow weary, and she suffers herself to be quietly conducted to church and married. All the party then return to the married couple's house, eating at free cost, but finding their own liquor. The sale of the wedding-presents of cheese and butter often produces from ten to twenty or thirty pounds, which, with the money also presented, is a seasonable help to the young housekeepers. Many of my Welsh friends tell me they have often joined the wedding troop, and that the chase is a most animated and amusing scene, the bride leading the cavalcade of merry equestrians in any direction, and the whole party scouring the country like mad folks.

We are apt to marvel at accounts of odd ceremonies and customs in other lands, without knowing half the peculiar habits and ancient rites still practised within the boundaries of our own country; many of which, especially among the Welsh, may be traced to the highest antiquity.

The familiar superstitions of Wales are becoming gradually fainter and fainter: death-lights and corpse-candles are almost extinguished: but in many instances, severe notions on religious subjects, amounting to fanaticism, have unhappily succeeded to the supernatural influences formerly credited. A good, intelligent system of popular education is greatly needed, and I trust will soon replace the dark and mischievous ignorance so general among the peasantry of the United Kingdom.

I was much surprised at finding the national instrument, the harp, so little cultivated in the different spots I visited in Cardiganshire; in fact, one blind woman was the only person I heard play; Nancy Felix, of Gogerddan, to whose neat little cottage many parties make an afternoon's excursion from

Aberystwith, and listen to the simple, beautiful old Welsh melodies which the sightless harper delights to hear praised. That love of music and capability of creating 'sweet harmony,' so generally bestowed on the blind, is a beneficent dispensation of Providence. Shut out from the use of our first corporeal blessing, sight, the ear becomes the chief source of enjoyment and intelligence, and music, 'most eloquent,' pours its soothing melody, like sunshine, into the darkened spirit. I can imagine the pleasure of the blind in listening to music, to be a sensation of delight too intense to be conceived by those blessed with sight. Our eyes convey so many and so various impressions of beauty and grandeur to our minds, that we are unable to appreciate the value of one sense, from the superior pleasure constantly derived from another. But to the blind, who know not the glory of the summer sun, nor the grandeur of the nightly sky—who have neither present impressions nor passed memories to people the imagination's dreary void—whose thoughts can but be echoes of uttered words—whose very dreams are formless—how very, very exquisite must be the pleasure of hearing sweet music! Nancy Felix is not young, nor has she ever been beautiful; but her calm, uneducated, yet almost dignified manners, true kind-heartedness, and cheerful resignation to her grievous calamity, rendered her to me a most interesting being. By her playing to parties, she gains support for herself and two sisters; her pretty cottage and neatly-kept garden (so different to her neighbours') are the kind gifts of her good patron, Mr. Bryse, of Gogerddan. The view from her little garden is one of most rare beauty, commanding the Vale of the Rheidol, and various ranges of cragged and woody hills, changing from vivid sunlight to dim shadow as

the air-hung clouds glide silently across the landscape. Who can stand beside that sightless Harper, and gaze on the glory of such a scene, without feeling how precious is the blessing of which she is deprived,—without fervently thanking God for the enjoyment of this most inestimable boon.

The copper and lead mines so abundant in Cardiganshire, invariably lie in the most sterile and rugged districts, and the rich veins of ore are imbedded in the hardest and most compact rock, rendering the working of them immensely laborious. The history of these mines, and the various restrictions and regulations to which their possessors have been subjected by the sovereigns of Britain, form a most interesting subject of research; I can here make but a brief allusion to the circumstances. For some centuries after the Conquest, the Crown asserted its prerogative in the ownership of all mines and minerals. No person could search for ore, unless empowered by the Royal grant, which was sometimes confined to particular counties, and sometimes extended to the kingdom at large. The conditions imposed were at the discretion of the reigning monarch. Edward the First directed the tithe of the ore, dug out of the Welsh mines, to be paid to the parochial churches in the vicinity. The owner of the ground in which a mine was discovered, derived no profit from its being worked, till the beginning of Henry the Sixth's reign, when the Duke of Bedford, Regent of France, obtained a lease of all the gold and silver mines within the kingdom for ten years, on payment of a tenth to the church, a fifteenth to the King, and a twentieth to the proprietor of the land. This grant extended to all other metals containing gold and silver: neither did it, by specifying gold and silver, forego the ancient claim of the Crown to

the appropriation of mines in general. In the year 1452, Henry the Sixth engaged three miners from the Continent, with their assistants, to work his mines, so profoundly ignorant were the English then of the arts and sciences from which they now derive so large a portion of their wealth and celebrity. Queen Elizabeth too, by the advice of her council, sent for some experienced Germans to carry on the business of the mines, as well as that of refining and smelting minerals. On their arrival they were no sooner naturalized, than the Queen, by her letters patent, granted to Thomas Thurland and Daniel Houghsetter, and their heirs for ever, licence to search for mines of gold, silver, copper, and quicksilver in various counties of England, and the Principality of Wales, for their sole use and profit, reserving to herself the tenth of all gold, silver, and quicksilver ores, and the pre-emption of refined gold and silver at a lower rate than the current price of those metals. A year after she made two more grants; one to Cornelius Devosse and the other to William Humphrey and Christopher Shutz. This last was the most comprehensive, for it included all mines, minerals, and subterraneous treasures, except copperas and alum, and extended to all parts of England, not appropriated by former grants. By all these instruments, as well as by those of former reigns, a power was given to sink shafts any where except in gardens, or underneath the foundations of castles or houses. This unlimited invasion of private property and public rights asserted immemorially, but utterly irreconcilable to reason and justice, was resisted, though unsuccessfully, by the Earl of Northumberland, in a suit with the Crown, or the persons holding under it, respecting the copper mines on his manor of Keswick. The lawyers, as usual whenever they have a decent

colouring, decided for the prerogative, on the ground that gold or silver, found in any mine, constituted that a Royal mine : and as the baser metals in most cases contain some particles of the more precious, the discovery of the smallest portion, of however little value, transferred that mineral property from the hands of the subject to the Crown. Neither was the title of the prerogative to the baser metals ever abandoned, though it was esteemed more plausible to prefer it under cover of what they might be supposed to contain, till the Revolution, when all these exorbitant claims were revised, and the prerogative more definitively settled. In the first year of William and Mary, the Crown abandoned its pretensions to copper, tin, iron, and lead mines, only claiming the gold and silver contained in the ore, whatever might be its quantity, at the current price of the base metal of which the ore principally consisted. In the reign of Elizabeth, Thurland, Houghsetter and the rest, dividing part of their tenure into shares, which they sold, formed a body, incorporated by the style of the ‘Governor, Assistants, and Commonalty of the Mines Royal.’ William, Earl of Pembroke, was appointed Governor. The first Court of Assistants was selected from among the nobility, the leading citizens, and the most intelligent of those foreigners, by whose settlement in the country the plan was carried into effect. These important measures were begun and completed between the years 1563 and 1568. Thus were the mineral resources of the country, instead of being dealt out piecemeal to favourites and courtiers too ignorant or indolent to estimate their value, or pursue their improvement—placed under the direction of such a public body, as could remedy in some degree the baneful effects, without abandoning the high pretensions of an unlimited preroga-

tive. Such was the foundation then laid for those great manufacturing interests, which required, and ultimately obtained a solid independence, fortified against the attacks of arbitrary power, and exposed to none but the very remote danger of our declining industry as a people.

Public attention now being directed into this channel, the discovery of metallic veins became so frequent, that the company, doubting, perhaps, the success of all the ventures which were proposed to them, began to farm their exclusive rights to enterprising individuals. The Cardiganshire mines, among the most abundant in lead and silver, were, during the whole of the seventeenth century, precisely in this situation.

Sir Hugh Middleton, whose enterprising character and great wealth render him somewhat of a hero in mining annals, realized the greater part of his property by farming the chief mines in Cardiganshire, which he held from the Governor and Company of Mines Royal at a yearly rent of four hundred pounds. He coined his silver into crowns, angels, &c., in Aberystwith Castle; and so profitable were his ventures, that from one mine alone, yielding one hundred ounces of silver from one ton of lead, he derived a clear profit of two thousand pounds a month. This princely revenue was all expended in his great work of supplying the city of London with water; an undertaking which had terrified every other adventurer; but which Sir Hugh Middleton completed in the reign of James I., who, with his court, was present at the first opening of this great public work. Sir Hugh, like many more public benefactors, impoverished himself for the benefit of thousands, and his family declined into narrow

circumstances—while he himself practised as a surveyor, to help out his shattered finances; in this line his talents were particularly serviceable, when employed on works of draining or mining. Many other of his great and useful achievements might be here enumerated, but our work being topographical rather than biographical, we must return to our more particular province.

The sojourner at Aberystwith will do well to visit the chief mining stations around that place, not alone on account of the internal wealth of the mountain-ranges by which he will find himself surrounded, but to become acquainted with the peculiarly wild, vast, and generally steril character of the scenery. The districts most rich in mineral treasures are almost invariably the most barren in vegetative beauty, but their

‘Huge crags and knolls, confus’dly hurl’d,’

broken into rugged glens, or traversed by deep and dark ravines, where the impetuous mountain torrents roar along, are magnificently grand, and serve well to enhance the sylvan loveliness of the graceful vales so often found beside these rugged regions of gloomy wealth.

I know not a better route for showing the gradation of Cardiganshire scenery than the ride from Aberystwith to the mines of Daren. The road, crossing a high hill, north-east of the town, leads you for some time in view of the luxuriant woods, pastures, and cornfields, which make the Rheidol valley such a garden of beauty, girt with swelling hills, and watered by its fair river. Shortly, in a narrow but avenue-like lane, you pass Gogerddan, the mansion of Mr. Pryse, surrounded by all of comfort, luxury, and beauty that

nature and art may combine for man's enjoyment. Farther on, after passing the Race-ground, the hedge rows become less thickly planted with fine trees, and the landscape loses much of its wooded richness. Soon a straggling dirty village of such cottages as I have formerly described, offers its divers impediments of pigs, poultry, pots, and pans to the equestrian traveller, and as he emerges from its peat-smoke atmosphere, the scene gradually grows more and more wild, cultureless, and vast, till enormous hilly masses of moorland, heaped mountain-wise one over another, form the whole expanse of country, varied only by the silvery threads of gushing streamlets, the alternating tints of gorse and heather, and the thinly scattered dwellings of the peasantry. Amid scenery of this character, on the road to Machynlleth, is the remarkable carn, supposed by some persons to be the burial place of the bard Taliesin, but Sir S. R. Meyrick, whose great antiquarian lore entitles his opinions to general credence, considers it rather the monument of a Druid. The last information we have respecting Taliesin leaves him at the court of King Alfred, who loved so well to retain around him the gifted of his age, that it appears unlikely that the bard would have returned to the comparatively uncivilized region where we find his supposed grave. Many of this poet's compositions are still extant, and have much of the grave, solemn, and peculiar beauty of the ancient Welsh minstrelsy. The history of Taliesin forms a romance of itself. He was, when an infant, exposed in a fishing-weir belonging to Gwyddno Garanhîr, King of Cardigan and Cantrev y Gwaelod. Elphin, son of Gwyddno, having obtained as a gift from his father all that should be taken in the weir during the space of one day, discovered young Taliesin, and became the protector and guardian of

the infant, who was afterwards the most accomplished and celebrated bard of his time, and was introduced by Elphin at his father's court, where he delivered Gwyddno a poem, giving a strange and fantastic account of himself, entitled *Hanes Taliesin*. In this he relates his former existences, a few of which we will here enumerate for the edification of the curious:—

‘I was little Gwion heretofore,

Taliesin I am now.

I was with my Lord

In the superior state

When Lucifer did fall

To the infernal deep.

I have borne a banner

Before Alexander.

* * * *

I have been chief keeper

Of the work of Nimrod's tower.

I have been three revolutions

In the circle of Arianrod.

I was in the Ark

With Noah and Alpha.

I beheld the destruction

Of Sodoma and Gomorra.

I was in Africa

Before Rome was built.

I was with my Lord

In the manger of the she-ass.

I strengthened Moses

Through the Jordan water.

I have been in the firmament

With Mary Magdalen.

* * * *

It is not known what is my body,
Whether flesh or fish.
I have been an instructor
To the whole universe.
I shall remain till the day of doom
Upon the face of the earth.'—&c.*

My readers must not imagine all Taliesin's poems to have been of this more than Ossianic degree of incomprehensibility; on the contrary, many have, as I before remarked, passages of great beauty. The mysterious idea of repeated existence haunted his poetic imagination, and becomes almost ludicrous in narration, from the positive manner in which he recapitulates his ancient exploits and adventures: yet at the same time even this wild rhapsody would, doubtless, be perfectly consistent with the half-druidical, half-christian doctrines then current; and we see from our old English romaunts how 'high fantastical' were the legends and miracles then in vogue.

* The original of the poem from which these stanzas are taken, may be found in most collections of Welsh Minstrelsy.

CHAPTER IV.

PLINLIMMON—LLANGURIG—RHAIADYR—NEW RADNOR.

HIGH o'er his mates, how huge Plinlimmon lifts
His many-beaconed head!—O'er-coronalled
With still and shadowy mist,—or rolling storms
That speak loud-voiced to the echoing hills,
And rouse repeated thunder.

* * * *

————— See yon vale,
Where, dancing onward, like a sportive child,
A gushing streamlet frolics in the light,
Gushing from rock to rock, as though its waves
Were the transformed feet of mountain nymph,
And these her wonted haunts. And even so
May our fantastic fancy deem her yet—
That brook is e'en Plinlimmon's fairest child—
The peerless WYE.

L. A. Twamley.

HITHERTO I have been wandering at will, and leading my readers in an erratic and uncertain track, whither chance and my wayward fancy directed. Now our path will be restricted, at least for the present, to the banks of the river Wye, which, as our heroine for the time being, shall receive careful attention in our proposed biographical and topographical memoir.

My own Wyc-ward progress having been made from Aberystwith, I cannot, perhaps, do better than marshal my readers the way I went. On quitting the interesting vale of the Rheidol, (by the new road to Rhaiadyr,) stupendous mountains close in on every side, round which the road is carried, winding along their precipitous sides, without the semblance of a fence for the consolation of the nervous or timid traveller, save a few whited stones, placed at intervals on the verge of the perpendicular ravine which yawns below, to indicate the curve to be taken by the skilful charioteer. At the time of my passing these magnificent scenes, the gorse,

‘ That bonny wild flower
Whose blossoms so yellow, and branches so long,
O’er moor and o’er rough rocky mountain are flung,
Far away from trim garden and bower,’

was blooming in its most lavish loveliness of hue and fragrance, perfuming the clear mountain air with its soft breath, and shedding a rich golden light over the wide, untenanted hills, then calmly sleeping in the glow of a summer afternoon sky. The heather, too, spread far around its pink and purple bells, where the wild bees were busily humming and gathering their sweet store in the merry sunshine.

Ere crossing the upmost ridge of this mountain chain, a most lovely view of Cardigan bay greeted me; there it lay, sunlit to the horizon, and specked with a fairy array of white-winged, gleaming vessels, softly, and to me, imperceptibly gliding along. It was a beautiful, yet a sad view; for I left much that was dear behind, perhaps never to see again; and, albeit a wanderer in many lands, my heart

has room for fond memories of them all. Either the bright sunlight dazzled my eyes, or something dimmed them, so I went on my way—if not rejoicing, at least in that half-subdued, thoughtful mood, which best suited the grand, calm solitude around.

Journeying on, through defiles cut in the solid rock, and then over a wild, dreary tract of country, covered with turbaries and intersected by vein-like streamlets traversing the mimic valleys of the turf in all directions, I reached the comparatively good inn at Pont Herwid, and during the rest I allowed my quadruped companion, set forth on an exploratory walk about the neighbourhood.

Proceeding to the white rails in front of the house, with very feminine curiosity, to see what they enclosed, my amazement may be imagined at finding myself on the verge of a tremendous chasm, in whose deep and dark abyss the Rheidol roars along, chafing the stupendous rocks on either side, which seem to leave too narrow a path for the foaming, furious torrent. The perfectly horizontal position, and regular structure, of the square and sharp masses of rock which form one side of this ravine, give them in many places the appearance of fortifications and castle-walls; while those on the opposite bank, perhaps not more than fifty feet asunder, are seen assuming forms utterly dissimilar in aspect and direction to those from which they have evidently been separated by some great convulsion of the earth; the disruption occasioning the deep crack or ravine through which the Rheidol now flows the whole way to the Pont ar Monach, whose wild and fearful scenery scarcely exceeds that around Pont Herwid.

The Rheidol wears the usual mountain-stream hue here of dark brown, and as its heavy waters roll along the deep gulf below the dizzy traveller, they look almost black in the shadow of the huge barriers which shut out any but a vertical sun from the dim recesses of this wild ravine. The Castell, a purer and nearly colourless stream, flowing from an opposite direction, meets the Rheidol at this spot, and plunging down a narrow defile in the rocks, forms a magnificent cascade, flinging its scattered streamers of snowy foam, sparkling in the upper air, to join the murky, heavy-rolling waves of the larger river below. The whole scene is wondrously, indescribably grand and beautiful—and the rich purple of the heather-bells, the pink tinge of the ling, the scarlet berries of the mountain Ash, gleaming out from their graceful, fringe-like foliage, grouped with the elegant form of the Birch, which seems to bend over the ravine as trying to see its delicate branches mirrored in the stream so turbulently boiling along below—with a thousand minuter beauties gemming both turf and crag with their exquisite forms and colours—all smiling in the sunlight, as if exulting in their own fair loveliness, combined to render this a scene for memory to cherish for aye.

A picturesque mill with its busy wheel and foaming stream very agreeably enlivens the near landscape, while the cloud-capped mountains rise majestically above, to complete this unimaginable scene.

The windings of the chasm or ravine are very singular and abrupt; I thought, as I stood gazing in rapt admiration on their tortuous and rugged sides, what a beautiful thing it would be—though certainly only practicable for a bird—to follow the Rheidol through all these

wild glens and dingles, down to its union with the My-nach, and so on to Aberystwith:—but 'tis time to act as well as think—so 'to horse! to horse!'

Beyond Pont Herwid the road becomes less interesting, and the prospect less beautiful, though very grand and exalting. How free one's spirit feels among these trackless mountains! No marvel is it to me that my noble ancestors, the Cymru of old, were all but unconquerable—the very sight of their hills is enough to make a patriot's spirit arise in the tamest heart. Dwellers among mountains have ever been dearer lovers and braver defenders of their native climes than the sojourners on monotonous and level tracts of country. The Switzers, the Tyrolese, the Highlanders, and the Welsh, are ample proofs of this. Even a transient glimpse of such scenes as their lives were passed among, has its effect both on mind and body. How boundingly we traverse the high and breezy hills! The fresh, free air seems to elevate and purify our thoughts; and the foot, treading the springy heather, gains swiftness and elasticity as it skims along. We sing aloud in simple youthful exultation, and feel as if we could soar through the bright blue sky above us like the lark;—such glad and buoyant beings can an hour's life on these hills create out of staid, sober, matter-of-fact worldlings.

Our next resting-place bears the sounding name of the 'Plinlimmon Hotel,' a small way-side hostel at Eisteddfa Gurrig, so grandiloquized; and hence, procuring a guide, the summit of the hoary mountain is generally ascended. Being rendered dangerous by swamps and turbaries, this journey is not very frequently attempted; nor is the view, for which these perils are risked, a sufficient reward for

the toil and difficulty of the pilgrimage, even when the atmosphere is tolerably clear, which is rarely the case. However, supposing all things propitious, and that the adventurous traveller escapes the predicament of a fair friend of mine, who became a fixture for a short time in a too hospitable turbary-bog, the panoramic prospect from the mountain-top, at an altitude of two thousand four hundred and sixty-three feet will include in its wide spreading outline the many ridges of Cardiganshire hills, lying in wavy extent beneath, and expanding in various directions; on the north appears Cader Idris, and part of the Snowdonian chain; to the east and north-east appear the high lands of Hereford and Salop, and the Breidden hills; on the west lies the wide expanse of Cardigan's fair bay, with the channel, and perhaps a faint line on the horizon, which is Ireland.

Plinlimmon is famed in historic annals as having been an important station occupied by the renowned Owen Glyndwr, in the summer of 1401, who here posted himself at the head of his men in arms. From this place he harassed the country exceedingly; sacked Montgomery, burnt Pool, and destroyed the Abbey of Cwm Hir, in Radnorshire; his entrenchments still remain on his mountain citadel.

Numerous birds frequent this spot, ravens, cranes, herons, snipes, both the lesser and the greater, with flocks of plovers. The hill has little vegetative beauty to smooth its rugged features of wild, sterile grandeur, towards the summit patches of coarse grass mingle with heaps of loose stones and fragments of rock which lie all around, among which are quantities of very pure quartz. Amid these blocks of quartz are numerous hillocks of peat earth, so light as to be driven about by the

wind like sand hills on the sea-coast. The summit is divided into two heads, upon each of which is a *carnedd*. That on the highest peak is of a pyramidal shape; perhaps used formerly as a military beacon. It is held as a sacred custom among most of the Welsh who visit the mountain, to add one or more stones to the heap.

The chief celebrity of this hill-king of Cambria is the circumstance of five rivers having their origin among its knolls and *cwms*, for *Plinlimmon* is rather a group of three mountains, each of which consist of many lesser ones, piled pyramid-wise into one gigantic heap, than a single mountain, and from their fissures and dislocations flow forth the several streams of the Severn, the *Rheidol*, the *Llyffnant*, the *Clevedoc*, and the *Wye*.

In its early youth the *Wye* is the most important of these sister-rivers, and thence its name of *Gwy* or *Wye*, signifying 'the river,' and though in magnitude the stately *Sabrina* soon surpasses our fair favourite, in loveliness she is unrivalled, and these pages must be to her as knights of old, proclaiming her peerless charms, and calling in the artist-witnesses to prove the truth of their statements. Following the *Wye* from her source amid turbaries and swamps, I soon found myself journeying side-by-side with a gay, sportive streamlet, playful as a child, dancing merrily down the glen, frisking about in foam and spray if a stone on a rock chanced to offer a pretext for a splashy gambol, and wearing the russet tint of her neighbour-streams. Mountains, glorious mountains! cradle the young beauty as she bounds into light, and long do they shelter her amid their fortress-rocks, and bend their hoary heads over her frolicsome path, like aged grandsires smiling fondly and calmly on the vagaries of the petted child, who tumbles and gambols around their feet.

Feeling disposed to remain in the immediate vicinity of such wild and magnificent scenery as the early part of the Wye's progress led me into, I determined to take up my night's quarters at the first inn which presented itself; accordingly on entering Llangurig, a place honoured in all travellers' note-books with the cognomen of 'wretched,' I halted at the open door of what I half-instinctively felt to be *the* house of entertainment, and, as it proved, the only one in the place. 'My good woman,' said I, addressing a mob-capped personage who appeared at my rather noisy summons, 'My good woman, can I have a bed here to-night?' 'I thinks, iss; but it wass not one she'll be likes.' 'Never mind—let me see it.' 'Iss, but you wass not like hur.' She was right, I did not like it, indeed—a hay-loft had been luxurious in comparison—but here was no hay-loft neither, so I had no alternative but to proceed to Rhaiadry. However a blazing peat-fire tempted me to the kitchen, and while making a hurried repast, I was indulged with Welsh singing, much rapid Welsh converse, and peals of light hearted laughter from the merry crowd of both sexes there congregated, among whom it seemed,—I hope I do not scandalize the ladies by so saying,—that the stout Welsh ale was doing its wonted magical work.

The fire was divided into two portions, over one hung a huge iron pot, with a flat lid, on the top of which lay five or six blazing clods of peat-turf. On enquiry, I found this was the family oven, or in other words, 'she wass to fire bread in'—and inside was a loaf of wheaten flour of most comely dimensions, similar to the one I had been laying rather vigorous siege to, and which was excellent household bread, though had my appetite been less keenly





sharpened by Plinlimmon's cool breezes, I might perhaps have objected to a slight flavour of peat-smoke, which is not quite so great a desideratum in bread as in whiskey. The walls and rafters of this apartment-of-all-work were well garnished with bacon, cheese, and other substantials; and truly the 'house' had no lack of custom; though I could wish for my own, and other travellers' comfort, that it was one of a better class. The hostess evidently wished so too, and doubtless, ere long, Llangurig will boast of 'superior accommodation.' The village, though mean and squalid in itself, is finely situated on the north bank of the Wye, and surrounded with lofty mountains, the lower portions of which are in some places clothed with wood.

When I left Llangurig, the full-orbed moon was just rising above the ridge of hills to the eastward, and her strong, clear light, together with the host of bright stars peeping through the deep, dark-blue sky, left me no reason to regret the 'garish light of day;' for all the features of the grand and beautiful scenery I traversed were visible in the calm, quiet light which invested them.

On my right hand, side by side with the road, flowed the Wye, seen ever and anon through the intervening trees; her clear waves glancing brightly in the silvery moonbeams; and here and there, where a few rocks interrupted the fair nymph's progress, chafing and foaming along in a series of rapids, as if conscious how well a little wrath became her. On either side of the river rose stupendous hills—mountains were a more correct term—with their feet in the vale, and their heads soaring far in the starry sky—craggy and cleft, and worn into many a fantastic ravine by the cascade-streamlets that rush down their steep sides, bringing tributary waters to the

Wye. Glorious, in their silent, shadowy grandeur, were those half-seen mountains, rearing their storm-riven heads like giant-spectres, and looking sternly and scornfully on little things below. The whole scene, the soft moon-light, the lofty mountains, and the 'shining river,' made so sweet a picture, that I would it were here in effigy to gladden the eyes of my readers, as it did my own in its fair reality. Journeying on, I passed many lovely green-looking glens, where the sound of the tumbling, gurgling water, and an occasional splash of feathery foam, told of a torrent's path amid verdure and flowers.

On approaching Rhaiadyr, after passing the Nanneth rocks, the bed of the river changes considerably in character. Through the valley, near Llangurig, it has been bordered by low turf banks, here it becomes narrower and rocky, being, in fact, a chasm through which the confined waters roar and struggle along in loud chiding anger. The river is now one continued series of rapids and cascades, overhung and fringed by places

' With many a tree and many a flower,
Decking the Naiad's mountain-bower ;
Shading her heaving, foam-white breast,
Or gaily crowning the dark rock's crest.'

Very, very beautiful is that wood-hung, torrent-ravine, and the more beautiful because its perpetual curves and turnings prevent the greedy eye from grasping much of the scene at once and being satisfied—but by ever keeping some dainty bit in reserve, and giving out its beauty by degrees, the eye wearies not ; unless, indeed, it be sleep-heavy—as were both mine, even beside the Wye by moonlight !—a heinous and most unromantic offence I confess, but being true, however







unpardonable, I shall no longer detain my readers even in imagination, in the keen night air, but, exchanging the bright river's banks for the ill-lighted and dirty, and not odoriferous streets of a straggling town, enter Rhaiadyr.

The town of Rhaiadyr itself presents little to interest the traveller; it consists of two long straggling streets crossing each other at right angles, with an old town hall in the centre. The situation is most beautiful, on a rising bank eastward of the Wye, surrounded by magnificent ranges of mountains, whose intervening valleys are rich in verdure and cultivation, watered by clear and rapid streams, and enlivened by scattered cottages.

No vestiges remain of the Castle, which, during the dominion of the Welsh princes, was a station of much importance; it stood on the Wye bank, north-east of the town.

The Bridge, and falls of the river immediately below it, form the most picturesque scene to be found in the vicinity of Rhaiadyr. The Wye, now become a large and important stream, rushes through the one grand and lofty arch of the bridge, and, flowing rapidly onwards, is suddenly flung over a group of rugged masses of rock, forming a wide, varied and beautiful cascade. The name of the town, Rhaiadyr Gwy, is derived from this fall of the Wye or Gwy; Rhaiadyr signifying a cataract, and Gwy a river, a name given preeminently to this river, from its being at the outset, the largest of Plinlimmon's streams, and so called Gwy or *the* river.

A few miles from Rhaiadyr, in a delightful valley, the persevering antiquarian may gratify his love for the departing glories of monastic fanes, by imagining that he can trace the remains of the ancient and renowned monastery of Abbey Cwm Hîr, formerly a religious house, founded, accord-

ing to Leland, by Cadwalnol ap Madawc, in 1143, for sixty Cistercian Monks; and destroyed in 1401, by Owen Glyn-dwr. Portions of the carvings and masonry have been carried away from time to time for the erection of farm-buildings, &c., so that the few relics left of the once 'grande Abbaye' are trifling, and unsatisfactory to the traveller.

Numerous *carneddau* arise on the heights around this neighbourhood; and tumuli are not unfrequently seen, but the chief charm it boasts is the wild and magnificent character of its natural beauties—its frowning mountains, romantic glens, and torrent streams. To acquire a right conception of these glories, a wanderer could scarcely pursue a better route than the one I will here briefly sketch for the benefit of any who may condescend to follow my track. Quitting Rhaiadyr, and passing over the bridge, choose the northward road, (the old road to Aberystwith) it leads gradually along the side of a steep, cliff-like hill, overhanging a green little valley turfed like a lawn, sprinkled with cottage dwellings, and bounded by the everlasting hills, while in its very bosom lies a lake—black, even in the laughing sunshine—like an ink-spot in the verdant carpet. Toiling wearily onwards, for the hill up which we go is four *long* miles long, and as the landlord of mine inn rather poetically observed, 'you seem to be going to Heaven,'—ground comparatively level is at length gained—a high, wide, swelling moorland crowned in several places by *carnau* and tumuli, and extending around, far as the eye can reach, in one vast, undulating waste, untenanted and uncultivated. The solitary grandeur of the scene is impressively beautiful, and the countless sky larks which people the clear air with their sweet voices, warbling their most eloquent music blithely around, add to the stern majesty of Nature her

choicest melody. Springing from the turf within a few feet of the solitary wanderer, they soar past him, their quivering, twinkling wings soon lost in the deep expanse of the cloudless summer sky, and their songs, like spirit voices, greeting him from forms unseen. I involuntarily exclaimed in the words of the poet Hogg—

‘ Bird of the wilderness,
Blithesome and cumberless,
Sweet be thy matin o’er moorland and lea,
Emblem of happiness,
Blest is thy dwelling-place,
Oh! to abide in the desert with thee!’

Beside the road, and trickling down among the rocks or knolls of the hills, a thousand little streamlets are dancing and sparkling along, while flowers, minute, but wondrously beautiful in their miniature forms and delicate colours, enamel the turf, and sweeten it for the straggling and timid sheep. Here and there, a grave looking, pompous raven hopped heavily about, and seemed to be taking accurate observations of my movements in his neighbourhood, but no human shapes appeared in sight, until, descending on the opposite side of this moorland, I found a party of peat-cutters busily at work in a turbary, stacking and carrying their winter stock of fuel.

Descending to the valley, the traveller should cross the Elan, and then, trusting himself to the river’s guidance, follow it through all its fantastic curves, now through a bleak rocky ravine, then through a vale of fairy-like beauty, till he arrive at Cwm Elan, the paradise of the district, created, like Hafod, out of bare and cultureless land. The poet Bowles has devoted one of his sweetest descriptions to Cwm Elan, I

cannot forbear quoting a few of his graceful, penciling lines—

‘Now wind we up the glen, and hear below
The dashing torrent, in deep woods concealed ;
And now again, while flashing on the view
O’er the huge craggy fragments—
But loftier scenes invite us ; pass the hill,
And through the woody hanging, at whose feet
The tinkling Elian winds, pursue thy way.
Yon bleak and weather-whitened rock, immense
Upshoots amid the scene, craggy and steep,
And like some high embattled citadel
That awes the low plain shadowing. Half way up
The purple heath is seen, but bare its brow,
And deep-intrenched, and all beneath it spread
With massy fragments riven from its top.
Amid the crags, and scarce discerned on high,
Hangs here and there a sheep, by its faint bleat
Discovered, while th’ astonished eye looks up,
And marks it on the precipice’s brink
Pick its scant food secure. Now through the wood
We steal, and mark the old and mossy oaks
Imboss the mountain’s slope ; or the wild ash,
With rich, red clusters mantling ; or the birch
In lonely glens light-wavering ; till behold
The rapid river shooting through the gloom
Its lucid line along :’

Such is the lovely valley of Elian, and well do its myriad beauties repay the wanderer’s toil.

Before proceeding on my Wye-pilgrimage, it may perhaps appear but correct, that proper respect be paid to the county town of New Radnor, which is however but a mean, squalid looking place. Its Castle, which formerly occupied a high artificial mound, north-west of the town, was finally demolished

by those determined and persevering levellers, the Parliamentarians, during the Civil Wars. The decline of Radnor is dated from Owen Glyndwr, who destroyed the castle then existing, and ravaged all the surrounding district. A fragment of a foundation, composed of the black slate or flag stone of the neighbourhood, is all now left, save the earthworks, which adjoin the churchyard. The Church is an old and simple structure, with a low square tower, and very few narrow windows; an antique sun-dial and some fine old yew trees adorn the small enclosure surrounding it. The view from the Castle tump of the Vale of Radnor, Radnor Forest, and the rich, garden-like country towards Presteign, is exceedingly beautiful. Old Radnor has long been a place of small importance, and is now chiefly noticeable for its fine old church, which occupies a commanding situation on a rock, and contains some curious and valuable carving, monuments, &c. Not far from Old Radnor are the Stanner Rocks, a volcanic group, highly picturesque in form and magnitude, and bearing in their almost inaccessible clefts numbers of rare and beautiful wild flowers, in *honour* of which one part is vulgarly called the Devil's Garden. The stone being of a hard compact texture, and useful for road-making, these singular and interesting rocks are in a fair way for demolition, being quarried to a great extent. About three miles from the Stanner Rocks is Knill Court, a tasteful residence in one of the loveliest spots imaginable. Within the grounds stands the small and simple ivy-grown Church, where Sir Samuel Romilly was interred. A stream runs at the foot of the steep, but not lofty bank on which the house and gardens stand, and opposite rise the wooded and magnificent hills of Knill Garraway and the Herrock, both traversed by

Offa's Dyke. At a very short distance is an ancient encampment on Burva Bank, and pursuing the road to Presteign, the grand lime rocks at Nash are equally welcome to the eyes of painter or geologist, to the one for their noble forms, to the other for the organic remains they contain.

The neat, clean, cheerful appearance of Presteign forms a pleasing contrast to the generality of towns in Radnorshire, and it is now the most important place in the county. The Church is adorned in the interior by painted figures, and scriptural inscriptions. The Castle of Presteign, like so many of its compeers in former feudal grandeur and tyranny, has vanished from its place. The site, called the Warden, is now more worthily occupied by pleasant winding walks, shaded by beautiful trees, and affording glimpses of the surrounding most lovely scenery. The remarkably fine encampment of Weobly, or Wapley Hill is only four miles distant from Presteign. To the antiquarian this is a highly interesting relic, being one of the most perfect camps remaining in Britain. It is irregularly oval; on the east, west, and south are four ditches, but the north being nearly inaccessible, is only defended by a single vallum, which runs along the brow of the hill. It is said to have been originally thrown up by the Romans, but Caractacus occupied it for a considerable time with a formidable force. How changed is now the scene of former martial pomp and warlike tumult! Instead of armed legions of soldiery, thronging with heavy tread the crowded camp, the innocent rabbits go springing over the heather—sole tenants, save the wild birds, of this 'great station.' Where bristling lines of spears were wont to girdle the whole hill-side, an ocean of fern leaves are waving gracefully in the summer breeze; and the steepest side of the

hill, called the Warren Wood, is a rich plantation of young oaks, full of lovely labyrinthine walks and arcades, redolent of the perfume of all sweet flowers that love the shade, and abounding in rare and lovely ferns.

The panoramic view from the summit is one of great extent and varied beauty: the Vale of Radnor, rich and luxuriant, opens to the west, backed by the gloomy and swelling outlines of the forest hills. Presteign and the villas at Broadheath and Stapleton appear on the north. Southward the eye recognizes the Skyrriid, Sugarloaf, and Black mountains—May hill, Malvern hills, and many more, which, as this digression to New Radnor and Presteign savours somewhat of truantism from our Leige Lady and Heroine—the fair Wye, we pause not here to describe: yet as few would journey back to Rhaiadry without visiting the chief Lion of the Radnor neighbourhood, a brief allusion may be here allowed to the wild cataract, called fantastically Water-break-its-neck. Quitting the highroad about a mile from New Radnor, I entered a glen of Highland wildness, between great hills spread far and wide around, swelling suddenly upward from the craggy banks of the clear mountain streamlet, which flows through the narrow valley in a meandering course over a rocky bed, forming miniature pictures of cascades and rapids. Small silvery thread-like lines, glittering among the turf on the distant heights, showed where the tributary waters were trickling down, and ever and anon a troop of playful sheep, chasing each other along the hill-side, might be seen leaping lightly across the small ravines worn by these petty cataracts, which, when swollen by wintry rains, no doubt sweep down in formidable volume. On I wandered—along this wild glen, which seemed to grow yet

more dreary and solitarily grand as I advanced. Still keeping close to the stream and often crossing it by springing from rock to rock, I arrived at an abrupt turning, which placed me at once in a cavern-like ravine of slate rocks, rising high and dark on either side, like walls of masonry mouldering with age, seeming ready to topple over and crush the passing traveller, yet in parts richly hung with trees and parasite plants.

‘ High
The rock’s bleak summit frowns above our head,
Looking immediate down, we almost fear
Lest some enormous fragment should descend
With hideous sweep into the vale, and crush
The intruding visitant. No sound is here
Save of the stream that shrills, and now and then
A cry as of faint wailing, when the kite
Comes sailing o’er the crags, or straggling lamb
Bleats for its mother.’

Continuing along this defile, another sudden turn leads to the front of the fall, which is similar to the one at Pwll Caradoc, though less lofty and not so richly wooded. The rocks form a narrow, high amphitheatre, over which the water is precipitated in scattered portions, and falling into a dark pool, meanders away among the fragments of rock, until it gains the more open glen whence I had traced its course. At the time of my visit the fall of water was but small, and after heavy rains, when it is really worth the trouble of a pilgrimage, the whole of the rugged ravine is flooded, so as to be impassable. Skeletons of sheep and rabbits lie scattered about in this gloomy spot, the poor animals having fallen from the crags above, and been dashed to pieces.

Llandegley, a neat little village celebrated for its medicinal springs, lies on the way to Rhaiadyr, and is well worthy a brief sojourn, for the sake of its lovely scenery. A very singular range of rocks, abounding in beautiful quartz crystals, nearly joins the churchyard, and is much visited both for the views it commands, and the glittering treasures which may be won from the clefts and sides of the rock.

CHAPTER V.

WYE SCENERY FROM RHAIIADYR TO BUILTH—ABEREDWY—GLASBURY—HAY.

Now a little onward, where the way
Ascends above the oaks that far below
Shade the rude steep, let contemplation lead
Our wary steps; from this clothed eminence
'Tis pleasant, and yet fearful, to look down
Upon the river roaring, and far off
To see it stretch in peace, and mark the rocks
One after one, in solemn majesty
Unfolding their wild reaches, here with wood
Mantled, beyond abrupt and bare, and each
As if it strove with emulous disdain
To tower in ruder, darker amplitude.

Bowles.

GENTLE readers, we will now return to the Wye, and pursue our journey from Rhaiadry. Would that ye could all behold the scenes to which my pleasant wanderings conducted me; would that ye could see them, as I did, arrayed in their brightest and loveliest garb. The fairy sovereigns of the 'skiey influences' never bestowed a more heavenly morning on mortal pilgrim, than they vouchsafed to me for my journey to Bulth. The bend of the Wye below Rhaiadry was a picture ready arranged for any prince of the landscape

painters. The broad, quiet river, skirted with rich woods indicating the course of the stream by their curving direction; the distant town, half hidden beneath its light smoky mist, the bright meadow foreground, with a group of idle, happy boys basking in the warm sunshine, and pulling flowers among the grass, while near them an old white horse slowly and enjoyingly forded the clear brown stream—these were the *near* objects in the landscape, all engirt by the high hills, standing out in bright relief against the pure blue sky, their cwms intersecting them with lines of shadow, and meadows, and corn fields bordering the slope with their cheerful patchwork of enclosures; it was a scene which deserved to be immortalized by one of the noblest sons of the noble art.

Wending onwards, my road lay along the side of a gigantic, craggy, woody mountain, Gwastaden by name, on whose lofty summit are some of the largest carnau in the county. Opposite the abrupt turn which the road makes over this promontory-shaped hill at Aber daw ddwr, the Vale of the Elan opens to view, and its fair river joins the Wye, after passing under a light, simple wooden bridge, which, with one or two finely situated farm-steads on the river's bank, adds a sort of living, social beauty to the scene. The wooden bridges in Wales particularly please my fancy; they are so evidently built for use and not ostentation; and where one of the cumbrous, hump-backed brick affairs, we so abound in here, would shut out all of beauty beyond it, these more simple and suitable fabrics, add to a fine scene by their picturesque and unobtrusive forms, without hiding one other charm.

Still passing on, round the grand Gwastaden, the scene is constantly varying on the right, as we view the two vales

of the Wye and Elan in different positions, ever lovely, ever new, while on the left, the ‘huge crags and knolls confus’dly hurled’ maintain their stern harsh features, gradually deepening in tone from the clearly seen rocks and heather in the foreground, to the dim yet rich purple of the o’er-crowning and distant peaks. The Vale of the Wye soon expands into a considerable flat, where the rock-chafed river murmurs between broad turfy banks, tenanted by large flocks of geese, who were most industriously picking their living among the swamps and rushes. Swans had been more classical adjuncts to the scene, but *all* travellers have not the power of transmuting homely into honourable things, and for my own part, I deemed the snowy geese very pretty and entertaining personages, parading their grassy realm, as if they conceived nothing on earth more lordly than themselves, and stretching their sapient heads disdainfully and contemptuously in the air, at the approach of so mean an animal as a poor pedestrian wanderer—verily, these geese strongly resembled bipeds of another class.

About four miles from Rhaiadyr, the small village and tiny church of Llanwrthwl, look out from their mountain nest of wood and heather, upon the broad river below, whose course we now pursue through the woods skirting its eastern bank, which only allow occasional peeps of the opposite towering hills, also belted with avenues and groups of fine trees. Numerous residences are erected in this vicinity, blending the cultivated and beautiful with the wild and stern, most harmoniously.

Proceeding along the road towards Builth, I occasionally diverged to the right, and walked along the banks of the sparkling river. Fresh vales, and hills, and streams opened

in all their loveliness as I advanced. On my left lay the hill called Rhiw Graid, and two or three miles beyond, the high and frowning peak of Dôlevan hill, a huge, cone-shaped 'monarch of the upper air;' surrounded by a number of farms. Regaining the high road I soon reached the little village of Newbridge, opposite to Llys-dinam, where, as intimated by the name, a bridge crosses the Wye. My sole guides were those right faithful ones the maps of the Ordnance Survey, and when occasionally 'forgathering' with a wayside gossip, and making enquiries or remarks on the neighbourhood, the utter astonishment manifested by my honest friends at my accurate knowledge of each locality, although now traversing the district for the first time, was highly amusing. They seemed in good truth, to imagine I was 'no canny,' as the Scotch say—and once, on my rightly naming a hill we were about to pass, my then companion, looking at me with a most comical mixture of fear and puzzlement in his face, exclaimed 'Then the tevil hurself told ye'—nor was a sight of my magical map any argument in favour of my innocence of forbidden knowledge—I must certainly be either a conjurer, or the 'tevil hurself,' to know the names of places I had never seen before.

Four miles from Builth the Wye receives the tributary waters of the beautiful River Ithon, whose course is marked by the same features of grandeur and romantic loveliness as distinguish the more important stream. The small, but singularly varied, and rich scene about Pont ar Ithon, is scarcely exceeded by any on the Wye *above* Ross. The Ithon flows past Llandrindod, whose mineral springs still attract invalid visiters, and which is an interesting neighbourhood to the antiquary, from the many Druidic and other

remains which it possesses. Another winding river, the Yrfon, falls into the Wye just above Builth, at which place a fine bridge spans the now wide stream over which we enter the town.

Builth, like Rhaiadyr, and all other towns in such splendid scenery, is finely and picturesquely situated, and seen from any of the surrounding heights looks pretty enough itself; but, on a nearer inspection, the streets prove narrow and zigzag, and contain but few good houses.

The Castle of Builth has shared the fate of its contemporaries at Rhaiadyr, Radnor, Presteign, and divers other places formerly held in feudal bondage by the owners and rulers of their respective fortresses; its existing ruins, comprising only a fragment of a foundation-wall on the north side of the keep-mound, which is forty or fifty yards in circumference, is encircled by a ditch, and defended on the north side by two trenches. These earthworks remain in tolerable distinctness, and form a favorite walk for the inhabitants of the town; they occupy about two acres of ground, and command a beautiful view of the queenly River Wye, the Vale of Builth, and a wide circle of mountains both near and distant; some enriched with forests, but the greater portion consisting of wild moorland and broken rocky ground. Brecknockshire, on the verge of which county Builth is situated, abounds in luxuriant and cultivated valleys.

History furnishes us with no account of the original founder of Builth Castle, nor the time of its erection, but it was most probably constructed by Bernard Newmarch, who also built the Castle and Priors of Brecknock, and many others. During the wars of the brave Welsh princes with



W. J. M. 1851.



King John, Builth Castle was several times besieged. In 1217, on the accession of Henry the Third, when Reginald de Bruce, neglectful of his allegiance to the Prince Llewellyn ap Jorwerth, whose daughter he had married, went over to the English Monarch, Llewellyn, turning his generally victorious arms against his faithless ally, despoiled him of all his important possessions except the Castle of Builth, which was so well garrisoned and defended as to resist the summons of its superior lord. In 1221, Reginald de Bruce was besieged in the same fortress by a party of Welsh lords; but King Henry, to whom he had remained constant, came with an army and raised the siege. In 1260, Llewellyn ap Gruffydd took this castle in the night, without opposition or bloodshed, from Roger de Mortimer, who then possessed it, and adhered to the English King, contrary to his solemn vows of allegiance to Llewellyn. It is supposed that a bridge, leading immediately to the castle, formerly existed a few yards lower down the Wye than the present structure, which was erected in 1770, and is a long and well-looking edifice.

At a short distance from Builth are the Park Wells, consisting of three mineral springs; saline, sulphureous, and chalybeate, each particularly strong. Pump Rooms, in which balls are occasionally given, and other accommodations are provided for visitors, who are often very numerous. The abundance of game among the neighbouring hills, the fine fish in the Wye and other rivers, together with the beautiful and highly salubrious situation of Builth, have induced many families to erect residences in the vicinity.

Continuing the Wye tour from this place, I crossed the little river Dihonw, a short distance from its junction with the

Wye; after passing which, the high road runs parallel with and close to the river, through avenues of fine trees, among which are many noble old oaks, which,

‘Stretching their gnarled arms
Across the road, o’erarched it like a bower
With rich, dense foliage, while their ponderous trunks
Made on each side a noble colonnade,
Through which the sunny river and the sky
Gleamed in successive pictures :—these were framed
In wreaths of delicate blossoms; eglantine,
That modest rustic sister of the rose,
Here blushed her loveliest, breathed her sweetest, too,
As the fond honeysuckle, zephyr-led,
Bent gracefully to utter perfumed sighs
To her young beauty. Nightshade’s purple flowers,
Hanging so sleepily their turbanned heads,
Rested beneath the hedge, and bryony,
So lavish of its vine-like growth, o’erhung
And canopied the flowers, while softened gleams
Of sunlight, falling through the leafy screen,
Shed a faint emerald tinge upon them all.’

The now wide and full-rolling stream of the Wye is here plentifully strewn with fragments of rock of all shapes and sizes, from the huge mass, like an overthrown tower, rising high above the swelling water, to the groups of weed-grown stones that only serve to chafe the impetuous torrent into momentary foam and fury :—

‘Here it lies darkling,
There it flies sparkling,
Now ’neath the shade of the oaks it will lie—
Then darts into sunshine—this gay river Wye!’

Huge mountains on either side confine the valley of the river

as we advance. Aberedw Hill rises on the left bank; and Allt Mawr, on the right, erects its stern, precipitous front high and frowningly over the shadowed path. The lower portion of the hill-side is here and there decked with orchards, whose trees, laden with fruit, are backed by the grand oak woods which robe it higher up, from among which the rocks peep out, and as they consist of horizontal blocks of compact slate or flag-stone, similar to those I described at Pont Herwid, and appear just on the high and commanding points of the eminence, they have the precise aspect of a grand, but ruined fortress. The same character is observable in the rocks on the opposite side the river, near Aberedw, where the romantic and beautiful stream of the Edw or Edwy flows into the Wye. The situation of Aberedw is most lovely; its retired village, decayed castle, and simple church, all on the banks of two rivers renowned for their scenery, form subjects for the poet's dream or the artist's study, inferior to few places on this famed track.

Aberedw Castle, though not so utterly rased as the others I have lately visited, has but a few dilapidated fragments remaining, and the plough has been carried into the very heart of these. The site of the castle is a scene of wondrous beauty; between, and closely overlooking the junction of the rivers Wye and Edwy, it commands a lovely and diversified prospect on all sides. The space occupied by the buildings does not appear to have been extensive. Aberedw was a residence of the last Llewellyn, probably a hunting-seat, and being celebrated as his latest refuge, I may be here forgiven for a brief repetition of a more than thrice-told tale, that of his escape and death. While the English King, Edward, had been effecting the overthrow and defeat of some of

Llewellyn's friends and adherents, the Welsh Prince had not been slow on his side in retaliating upon those of his countrymen who took part with the English; and the county of Cardigan, and the possessions of Rhys ap Meredith, might tell a woeful story of his strong revenge. After these exploits he quitted his army with a few friends, and came to Builth, which he had taken from the Mortimers, designing to remain at Aberedwy in quiet and obscurity for a time, while engaged with neighbouring chieftains in laying plans for the deliverance of his country from foreign domination. In passing along the Wye banks from Builth to Aberedwy, he encountered Edmund Mortimer's party, who recognised their lawful Prince, and though attended only by his esquire, they suffered him to gain the valley of Aberedwy, where he held his intended conference with the Welsh lords. The enemy, having repented their chivalrous conduct in allowing Llewellyn to escape, descended the hill, but found the bridge over the Edwy securely guarded by Llewellyn's adherents. The English, foiled here, were then directed by some traitors of Builth to a ford, across which a detachment passed, under command of Walwyn, who gained possession of the Prince's retreat, and attacked the defenders of the bridge in the rear, but not until Llewellyn had made his escape. Historians differ in relating the mode of his flight, but the popular Welsh tradition being now found to be supported by the authority of an ancient manuscript document, I prefer giving *that* version of the story. The snow being on the ground, Llewellyn had recourse to the expedient of reversing his horse's shoes, in order to baffle his pursuers, but the blacksmith proving treacherous, betrayed the circumstance to the enemy, and the unfortunate Prince had only time to conceal

himself in a narrow dingle before he was overtaken, and being disguised, he was killed by Adam Francton, a common soldier, without his rank being known: on the discovery being made, Francton sent the head of the deceased Prince to the English King at Conway.

The dingle is still called Cwm Llewellyn, and lies about two miles westward of Builth. A house, built on the spot where the body is said to have been interred, bears the name of Cefn y bedd, (the ridge of the grave); and not few nor unthinking are the pilgrims who come to trace out these scenes and spots so touched with sad and melancholy renown by the last struggles for freedom among the brave Cymru.

A calm, radiant autumnal sunset shed its rich, subdued light over the landscape, tinging the trees on the hill-sides, and pouring a dazzling glow of reflected clouds on the broad, rolling river, which, hastening on along its rocky channel, seemed to my fanciful eye a kind and eloquent companion, murmuring forth stories of her mountain home, and singing gladsome lays of Nature's majesty and love. So we journeyed together, the Pilgrim and the Wye, only parting for the night at Erwood, where I remained. Let no other wanderer follow my example, for I can promise him no one item of that precious English sum-total, *comfort*, in the way-side hostel he will find there; but, as I am no lover of grumbling, I shall avoid the recapitulation of my annoyances, and proceed on my next day's journey.

We frequently find in a retrospective comparison of our own opinions of certain scenes, with the feelings which others entertain respecting them, that our several notions are very various, if not diametrically opposed to each other; and that a spot we might designate grand, sublime, and romantic,

had appeared to one whose mind was generally entirely congenial to ours, dull, dreary, and uninteresting. Our own aptitude for enjoyment of the beautiful may be destroyed or enhanced by such trivial matters, that we are unaware of the change. I was about to pronounce the Wye scenery, between Erwood and Hay, flat and comparatively dull; but the remembrance of untoward circumstances attending my progress through it, account to me for my so feeling. Severe bodily suffering, and its attendant, mental apathy, were my unwelcome companions for a space, and if any of my readers deem the spots I shall pass hurriedly over, worthy of more lengthy description, they will kindly bear in mind my inability to enjoy them.

Opposite Erwood, on the north side of the Wye, is Garth Hill, a small eminence, on which appear the vestiges of an old British camp. Three miles from Erwood appears Llanggoed Castle, as it is termed, though the plain, comfortable-looking mansion, so named, has nothing in its outward seeming consonant to its title. The adjacent grounds are richly wooded, and some of the trees remarkably fine. Boughrood Castle, is another mis-named dwelling of the square, sash-windowed kind, apparently vacant. Near Boughrood is a singular horseshoe bend of the river, a curve of which runs by Llyswen, now a poor village, formerly, as its name (white palace) imports, a royal residence of the South Wales Princes, and the scene of stately festivities in days of yore. At Glasbury the Wye is spanned by a rude, singular bridge, partly consisting of stone and partly of wood, giving a very picturesque appearance to the village-like town; above which, on a lawny hill, stands Maeslough Castle. Verily, castles abound here, and this is an imposing looking edifice, adorned with





W. K. G. 7

HAY.



turrets, towers, and terraces, surrounded by ornamental grounds, and so placed as to form a chief object in the landscape for several miles.

The town of Hay is pleasantly situated on the rising bank of the Wye, and, from the vestiges of a Roman camp near the church, appears to have been of ancient origin. The manor of Hay was given by Bernard Newmarch to Sir Phillip Walwyn, who, probably, built the castle, of which little remains but a gateway, a dwelling house having been erected out of the ruin's materials. The town consists of one main street, and has a fine bridge over the Wye.

CHAPTER VI.

CLIFFORD CASTLE—WYE SCENERY TO HEREFORD—HEREFORD CATHEDRAL, &c.—
DINEDOR HILL—ACONBURY HILL.

O WHAT a goodly scene!—here the bleak mount,
The bare bleak mountain speckled thin with sheep;—
Grey clouds, that shadowing spot the sunny fields;
And river, now with bushy rocks o'er-browed,
Now winding bright and full, with naked banks;
And seats, and lawns, the abbey and the wood,
And cots, and hamlets, and faint city-spire :

————— God, methought
Had built him here a temple! —————
No wish profaned my overwhelmed heart.
Blest hour! It was a luxury—to be !

Coleridge.

HAY presents so little to interest the pilgrim of the picturesque, that we gladly pass on to Clifford Castle, a small but beautiful ruin on the east bank of Wye. Camden says, that it is recorded in Doomsday Book to have been originally built by Thomas Fitzosborn, Earl of Hereford. It came afterwards to Walter, the son of Richard de Ponce, a Norman, who came to England with William the Conqueror; Walter took the name of Clifford from this castle, and from him descended the family of the Earls of Cumberland. The

celebrated ‘Fair Rosamond,’ daughter of an Earl of Clifford, was born in this castle. Her story is well known. Hollinshead, speaking of Henry the Second’s incontinence, says, ‘But most of all he delited in the companie of a pleasant damosell whom he ’cleped the rose of the world; the common people named her Rosamond, for her passing beautie, propertes of person, and pleasant wit, with other anyable qualities, being verily a rare and peerlesse peece in those days. He made for her an house at Woodstock, in Oxfordshire, like to a laberinth, that is to mean, wrought like a knot in a garden, called a maze, with such turnings and windings in and out, that no creature might find her, nor come to her, save he were instructed of the King, or such as were secret with him in that matter. But the common report of the people is, that the Queene finally found hir out by a silke thread, which the King had drawne foorth of hir chamber with his foote, and dealte with hir in such sharpe and cruelle wise, that she lyved not long after. She was buried in the Nunrie of Godstow, beside Oxford, with these verses upon hir tumbel:—

“Hic jacet in tumulo, Rosamundi non Rosamunda,
Non redolet sed olet, quæ redolere solet.”

The renowned George Clifford, third Earl of Cumberland, and a great favourite with Queen Elizabeth, appears to have been one of the most ‘illustrious’ members of the Clifford family. An anecdote related of his daughter, the Lady Anne, who was successively married to Richard, Earl of Dorset, and to Philip, Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, deserves mention here. The Countess seems to have bated nothing of the family spirit on the score of feminine gentleness. Sir Joseph Williamson, when Secretary of State to Charles II.

wrote to the Countess, wishing to name a candidate to her for the borough of Appleby; he received the following reply—

‘I have been bullied by an usurper—I have been neglected by a court—but I will not be dictated to by a subject. Your man shan’t stand.

ANNE DORSET, PEMBROKE AND MONTGOMERY.’

Of this pithy and laconic letter-writer Dr. Donne remarked, that ‘in her younger years she knew well how to discourse of all things, from predestination to slea-silk,’ and if the decision and terseness of her conversation equalled that of her writing, I, for one, could wish ‘Anne Dorset’ alive again, that I might hear her talk—for a brief space.

Clifford Castle, from our description of which we have been beguiled by thoughts of ladies fair, is seated on a high knoll, overlooking the Wye, and appears to have held a good and commanding position in times of danger. The ruins are draperied with ivy, and surrounded by graceful trees; the neighbouring country is also richly wooded.

I have advanced so gradually from the sterner features of the Wye-banks, amid rocks and cloud-capped mountains, that the change of character in the scenery, though impressed on my own mind, has not, perhaps, been made sufficiently evident to the kind listeners of my home travels; they must bear in mind, if they please, that our queenly river has three distinct *phases*, if I may use the term. In her outset, sportive and frolicsome, gay as a maiden ’mid her native hills, she comes dancing and singing along, leaping merrily over the rocks that interrupt her course, and even when older grown, not forgetting her wild youthful antics. From Plinlimmon to ‘Aberedw the scenery through which we fol-

low her course is wild, rocky, picturesque, and sublime:—below Aberedw, the Wye grows somewhat more staid in her demeanour; and the surrounding scenes become more rich and luxuriant than startling or grand—they are more English. She goes on in a calm, maidenly mood, ‘girt with beauty;’ and, until we pass Ross, no material change appears in the cultivated, rich, happy-looking valleys, whose bright fields laugh in the summer sunshine, nor fear its drought, while their noble river rolls her full tide along. Her third character commences at Goodrich, and from thence to her union with the Severn all is richly, harmoniously grand—one series of glorious pictures outspread on either side the majestic stream. Do, reader, go, see them for thyself, and then tell me how far short of the truth is my feeble description.

At Rhydspence, about a mile from Clifford, the Wye quits the borders of Radnorshire, and turning eastward, brings all her wealth of beauty to enrich the county of Hereford, one of the garden plots of our dear England. Small, lovely villages are scattered along at intervals, with fine old gabled houses, wreathed with vines and roses from porch to roof-tree, mingled with jasmine clinging round

‘The massive mullioned windows, and the stacks
Of quaint, fantastic chimnies, that o’er-top
The pointed roof with ever varying store
Of twisted, carved, and lozenge-shaped device.’

Hollyhocks, those grand and graceful flowers, adorn the box-edged borders of the little crammed parterre before the windows, and, leaning over the crazy moss-grown palings in front, look abroad with a generous, frank, good-humoured glance for the passer-by, and a smile of kindly recognition to wonted guests.

Such gables and gardens the wanderer by the Wye-side from Hay to Hereford, will ofttimes pass, in his progress through Whitney, Winforton, Willersley, Letton, Bradwardine, &c., interspersed with meadow scenes. Between Letton and Staunton-on-Wye is Brobury Scar, a cliff rising from the river's northern bank, and agreeably breaking the even, rich luxuriance of the scenery around. Moccas Court, with its fair grounds and park-lands, lies on the southern bank; it was anciently called Moches, and was a part of the possessions of St. Guthlach. The old house stood below the site of the present, which is a modern structure, and was in part built from the ruins of Bradwardine Castle, now demolished, but in days of yore the family seat of Thomas Bradwardine, Archbishop of Canterbury, in the reign of Edward III., and for his deep learning named Doctor Profundus. From Moccas Park, crossing the brow of the intervening hill, we are tempted to descend into the far-famed Golden Vale, whose luxuriant vegetation, and gay, yellow vernal flowers well deserve such a fairy-tale name.

Journeying on we come in sight of Kenchester, the supposed Ariconium of antiquity, said to have been destroyed by an earthquake. The Roman encampment of Magna Castra is immediately adjacent, and various remains, telling of former occupants, consisting of Roman bricks, coins, &c., have been found on the spot. In 1669, a large paved vault, with some tables of plaster, were discovered in a wood not far distant, and the following year a bath was found, with the brick flues entire. A short distance south-east of Kenchester, is a spot called the Camp Field, and on the south bank of the river lies Eaton Camp; both these places have apparently been outposts to the chief station at Magna Castra.

Just before entering Hereford, at an angle of the road, is a stone cross, called the White Cross; its present height is not more than fifteen feet, the slender stages of the shaft having departed with by-gone time. The remaining portion consists of an hexagonal flight of seven steps, and the first and only existing stage of the shaft, which is also hexagonal, adorned with columns, and niches containing shields bearing a lion rampant. Tradition relates that this cross was erected about the year 1345, by Dr. Lewis Charlton, Bishop of Hereford, in memory of the time when, in consequence of an infectious plague raging in the city, the markets were held on this spot.

The city of Hereford disappointed my expectations; as all cities and towns do, when I enter their pent-up streets from the pure, free, blessed country, ‘and therefore little shall I grace the cause,’ though I do speak its praise. My kind and courteous readers!—You are listening to a wanderer’s story, and must e’en be content with descriptions of such things as suited my fancy to observe, bearing in mind, that I attempt not an inventory of all that *may* be seen, but only record what I myself did see. The morning after my arrival being wet and stormy, I bestowed my company on the Cathedral, and accompanied by an intelligent companion, whose love for the antiquities which surrounded us made him a right eloquent elucidator of their mystery and beauty, my wet morning proved a most pleasant one. The exterior of the Cathedral, though made up by places of somewhat incongruous materials, is grand and impressive, sombre, aged, and darkly venerable: and as we gaze on its dusky features, they seem to tell a tale of by-gone time, and we are insensibly led into enquiry and recollection of its origin and existences. According to some

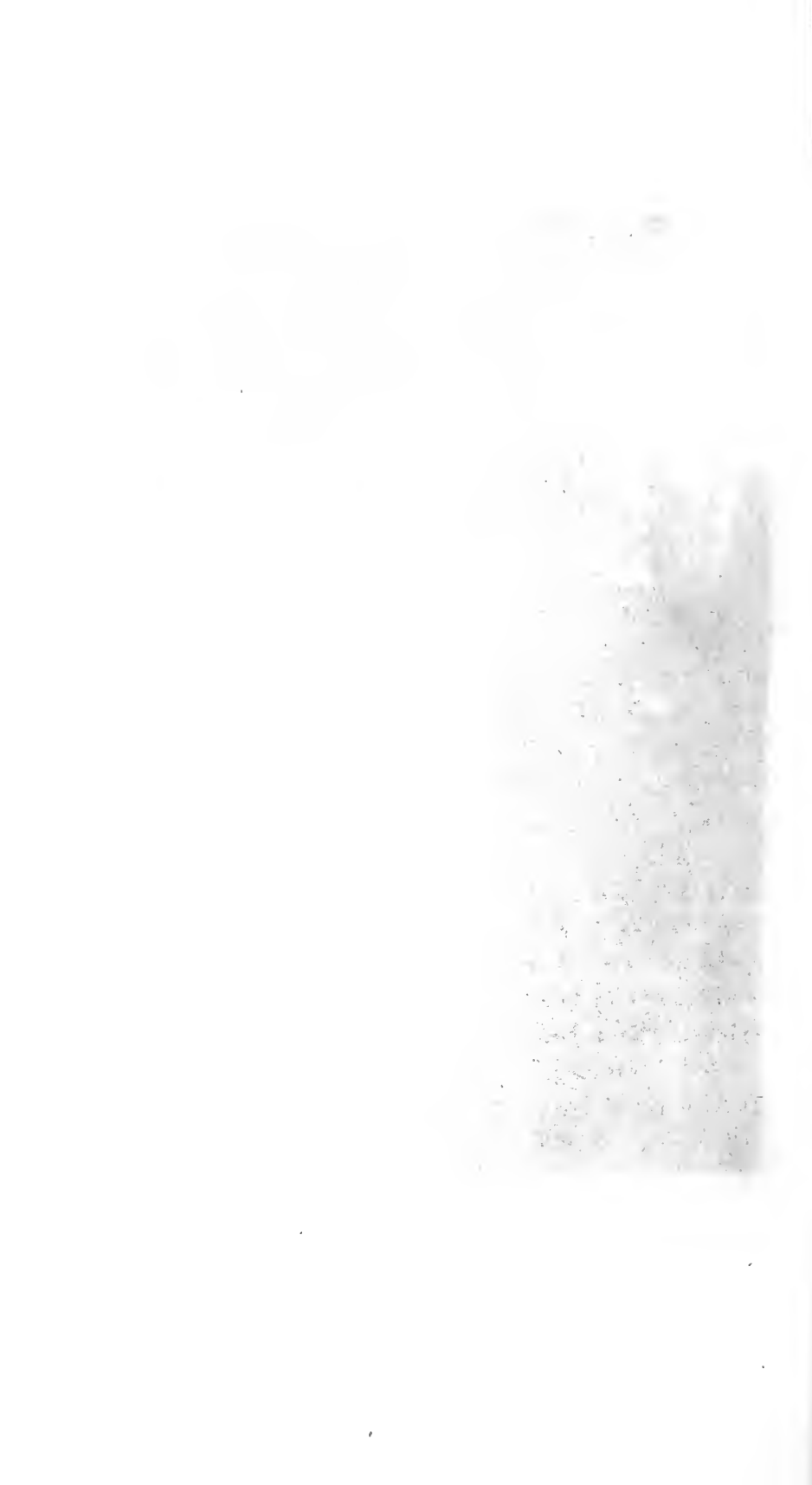
ancient authorities, this city (formerly called by the Britons Trefawith, Hênwith, and Hên-fordd, from which names the Saxons may have formed its present name) possessed a magnificent church as early as the reign of Offa, and was a flourishing place, and the seat of a bishop. Its prosperity continued under the West Saxon Kings, and in or about the time of Athelstan, the town was encompassed by walls. Leland mentions six noble ports or gates in the place, but destruction, under the specious name of improvement, has utterly demolished all these. Two, Wide-marsh gate, and another, existed till 1798.

Harold founded the Castle, of which nothing remains—the site forms a pleasant promenade, adorned with trees, on the bank of the Wye. I have neither space nor inclination to recount the names, and pedigrees, and bloody achievements of the successive chiefs and princes who have grasped this castle in turn: they who love chronicles so teeming with oppression, wrong, and villany, may find them in pages more fitting than the land log-book of so peaceful a pilgrim as myself.

Return we to the Cathedral, whose time-furrowed face sent fancy to question the antiquity of its birth. We find that a grand church has existed here from a very early period; but we also find that repeated destructions of churches successively built on this spot have occurred, and that the existing edifice owes its origin to Robert de Loxing, or Lozinga, who, being made Bishop of Hereford by William the Conqueror, commenced a church here in 1019, the former structure having been burned down in 1055. Lozinga died in 1095, but his design was completed by Bishop Raynelin, Chancellor to the Queen of Henry I.,

who held this see till his death in 1115. The central tower was built about a century after by Bishop Engidius de Bruce, and further alterations and additions have been constantly in progress, some good, some bad, among which latter must be classed those perpetrated in these ‘march-of-intellect’ times by the enlightened persons concerned in such matters. In the first place, they have made the hoary old walls glare within ‘like a whited sepulchre,’ wherever the greatest curse ever bestowed by human invention on the artist and antiquary can be exhibited—all is *white-washed*—the massive circular arches of the spacious nave are now, and even the beautiful oak carving in the choir was, coated with the abomination till recently. The altar part of the choir is strangely disfigured by being wainscotted in the Grecian style, and so making a Corinthian column stand side by side with a florid Gothic screen or pinnacle. The chapel of our Lady, now used as the Library, is a beautiful gem of architectural effect and symmetry. The group of lancet windows, with their receding clusters of slender columns and rich carving is, in good sooth, most pleasant to look upon; but the heavy bookshelves and desks in this place, with the precious tomes chained to their allotted nooks, and making an uncomfortable kind of jail-clatter and clang on being disturbed, give a jarring sensation to both eyes and ears. Bishop Audley’s chapel, a sort of second story offshoot to the Library, and looking down into it, is an exquisite little bijou in decorative architecture, finely carved and painted, or rather illuminated just like a rich old missal, and separated from the Lady chapel by a screen, carved and painted to correspond, and adorned with effigies of saints. Bishop

Stanbury's chapel is, to my mind, even more beautiful, because less gaudy; but its fairy fret-work and pendant roof, all so very exquisite, are darkened by some ill-mannered contrivance of our days, and lost, except to the prying and admiring eyes of resolute hunters after the beautiful. The monument of old Cantilupe is in a dilapidated condition, like 'many moe;' but some of these finger posts to dead men's memories are wondrously quaint and graceful, and fairly wrought; especially the canopied tomb of Bishop Acquablanca, a most beautiful specimen of the ornate, delicate elegance of the pointed style. Here, too, is the mutilated tomb of Sir Richard Pembruge, who died in 1375. He was ancestor of the Lords Chandos, and Knight of the Garter, in the time of Edward III. The right leg of this Knight's stone effigy having been demolished or carried off, an artificer was employed to replace it, whose knowledge of knightly costume not being equal to his accuracy in copying what he saw of it, he has invested the new limb with a fac-simile garter, to match the honourable badge which graces the sinister leg. This effigy is interesting from wearing the old tournament helmet, so much prized by antiquarians and collectors of armour. Numberless other monumental reliques crowd on my memory while mentioning the few I have done, but I must resist the temptation of introducing them to my readers: not even the devotional ladies so demurely kneeling on their marble cushions—not the mitred Abbots, and Bishops without number, may be added to my chronicle. But the famous old map of the world, I *cannot* pass in silence. How our modern 'march-of-intellect' men must hug themselves on our advancement in geographical lore, while con-







templating this rich bit of serious burlesque ! The map is done on very thick parchment, and is, perhaps, four or five feet square, the geographical portion being circular, and the corners occupied by emblematical devices and figures ; in one part is a grotesque representation of his Holiness the Pope, commissioning surveyors to make this marvellous chart, which represents the Archipelago in the immediate vicinity of London, with Paris, Rome, Constantinople, &c., all contiguous ; but description of this singular performance is nothing—it should be engraved, were it only for the self-gratulation such a proof of advancement would afford the present generation. This curiosity is attributed to the time of King John, and is tolerably well preserved, most of the names and figures being distinctly visible, and some of the illuminated parts quite brilliant.

Great neglect appears in almost every part of Hereford Cathedral, and where repairs or restorations *are* attempted, the very spirit of discord seems to prevail with the directors ; they crown Saxon pillars with Gothic arches, stop up light and elegant arcades by cumbrous, dark, dead walls ; shuffle monuments out of their places ; hide the grandest architectural beauty, and the most curious work of ancient art, by bran-new painted pews, and pert-looking epitaph-slabs ; destroy whole chapels to save the cost of repairing them (Bishop Egerton to wit), and bestow their atrocious malediction of whitewash on all things it can spoil.

One dainty morsel of Monastic architecture, was brought under my observation by the same kind and intelligent companion to whom I owe much of my enjoyment in the Cathedral antiquities. I allude to the ruin of the Pulpit-cross, now standing in a cabbage and potato garden, which

occupies part of the site of the ancient Monastery of Black Fryars. The cross is hexagonal in form, surrounded by steps, ascending to a covered stand or pulpit, in the centre of which is an ornamented pedestal of like form, from which springs the shaft of the cross, spreading in ramifications on the inner part of the roof, and rising from the point above, where it is broken off; buttresses support each angle of this beautiful remnant; and ivy, with other creeping plants adorn, while they aid in destroying it. The few remaining portions of the monastery, now used as stabling, &c., form a suitable back-ground to the cross, which is a perfect bit of beauty.

The following morning proved little more favourable for out-door exploits; I nevertheless resolved to perform my self-assigned task of a visit to Dinedor Hill; the very name has enchantment in it,—it sounds like something beautiful. Another ‘kind and intelligent companion’ charitably bestowed his society on the Wanderer, and forth we started, having in the mean time determined on ascending Aconbury Hill, instead of Dinedor—the former commanding *all* the view seen from the latter, and much more; and also possessing the merit—great in the eyes of a small antiquary—of having a well-defined Roman camp on its summit. We passed out of town over the bridge, where the Wye looks placid and smooth,—the beautiful romping hoiden of Plinlimmon tamed down into a quiet, *douce damosel*.

The meadow scenery around was very lovely, and full of fine groups of Cuypish-looking cows, standing just as a painter would have them, and as if conscious how well they looked in the bright green fields. The orchards were all beautiful enough to be gardens of the Hesperides, with trees

bending under their treasures of golden, russet, and ruddy fruit, hanging in luscious clustering wreaths, or heaped in juicy hillocks ready for cider-making. After passing the little village of Callow, and gaining the ascent beyond, the view opens grandly, and you push on, eagerly anticipating the treat to come. A narrow footpath leads from the high road, through the wood to the Camp Hill,—and a lovely path it is ! full of hazel bushes, and ferns, and flowers. On reaching the summit of the hill, the entrenchment is seen extending in an irregular oblong oval, with the elevated Prætorium, and chief divisions of the camp, clearly marked, though now covered with low underwood. Soon after our arrival on the spot whence the view was to be enjoyed, a ‘fine growing shower’ came on, and, increasing rapidly in vehemence, it ‘downward poured a deluge of disaster.’ I went, as a proper traveller should, ‘to see whatever could be seen,’ and so resolved ‘to bide the pelting of the pitiless storm,’ in full expectation that it would shortly pass over; so on the hill we remained, without shelter of any kind, or any semblance of a tree, save a few bushes and some famous blackberry brambles, which though they offered their best of meat and drink, had a marvellous ‘lack of dry lodgings for travellers.’ Despite the storm, which continued unabated, *I*, for my own part, positively enjoyed myself—aye, and heartily too; for the rain, heavy as it was over our heads, did not appear to be equally violent all around, and wore the semblance of a living silvery veil, occasionally lighted up by a burst of watery sunshine, which, resting on the white cottages sprinkled about, and on the city of Hereford, lying below us at a few miles distance, made them gleam brightly out by turns, and at every shift of the changing

clouds, a new picture burst into life and beauty. Hereford lay to the north, (look at the view from Dinedor, with the rainbow, and imagine such a scene realized); beyond, to the west, the Wye Valley, towards Hay, and the hills of Radnorshire; still west, but more southerly than these, appeared those ever grand landscape guests, the Skyrrid, Sugarloaf, and Black Mountains: eastward, the Malvern Hills, and the ridges about Stoke Edith. The dark clouds over head cast a black shadow on the near hills, while bright sunshine lit up river, spire, town, and tower, in the green vales beyond; and the distant mountains, frowning in grandeur, wore their storm-robcs of dusky purple, veiled in ever-changing silvery mist, now light and airy—anon thick and dense,—now smoke, now substance,—a dreamy curtain between us and the glory of the distant scenes. They who could stand on such a spot as this, and gaze around unmoved, must have a marvellously small allowance of heart and soul in their composition.

CHAPTER VII.

HAREWOOD—ROSS—GOODRICH COURT—GOODRICH CASTLE.

Who hung with woods yon mountain's sultry brow?
From the dry rock who bade the waters flow?
Not to the skies in useless columns tost,
Nor in proud falls magnificently lost;
But clear and artless, pouring through the plain,
Health to the sick, and solace to the swain.
Whose causeway parts the vale with shady rows?
Whose seats the weary traveller repose?
Who taught that heav'n-directed spire to rise?
The MAN OF ROSS, each lisping babe replies.

Pope.

THE Wye scenery between Hereford and Ross, though rich and luxuriant, presents so little of novelty or historic interest, that I preferred taking the more direct land road, which passed through a country of garden-like beauty and cultivation, sprinkled with lovely, cheerful villages and park land, and bounded in the distance by the glorious ranges of blue mountains I have before alluded to. Beyond Aconbury Hill, the road gradually descends, and passes through the village of Much Birch, where a very droll, old-fashioned garden amused me exceedingly, with its infinite variety of devices in cut and clipped yew trees; some carved into perpendicular

strings of apple dumplings, others bearing an *imaginable* resemblance to caricatures of 'the human form divine,' and, with the box borderings to correspond, looked most barbarously antique. One could not help conjuring up visions of strait-laced, long-waisted ladies in brocade and ruffles, and powdered beaus of the olden time in broad-tailed coats and bag wigs, promenading with 'stately steps and slow' through this grotesque garden.

Lovely prospects opened in all directions, and the hedges were gaily and beautifully adorned with the deep ruddy berries of the hawthorn, and the shining acorns gleaming among the rich yellow leaves of the fine old oaks, which were particularly grand about Harewood, the seat of the Hoskins family, a spot interesting as having formed part of the ancient Forest of Harewood, in which Ethelwold, King Edgar's minister, had a castle.* Here Mason fixed the scene for his fine drama of *Elfrida*, and his description is characteristic of many similar scenes in this luxuriant neighbourhood.

'How nobly does this venerable wood,
Gilt with the glories of the orient sun,
Embosom yon fair mansion! the soft air
Salutes me with most cool and temperate breath,
And, as I tread the flower-besprinkled lawn,
Sends up a gale of fragrance. I should guess,
If e'er content deigned visit mortal clime,
This was her place of dearest residence.'

Pengethly next appears, exhibiting the same features of charming home scenery, and abundance of beautiful cattle, the greater part of this district consisting of rich pasture land.

* Some authors fix Ethelwold's Park in Hampshire.

We next passed the village of Peterstow, and then entered Wilton, where the Wye is spanned by a handsome bridge, from which a broad terrace-like road leads into Ross, only a mile distant. This new road has been recently cut beneath the red cliffs, on the summit of which the church, and its surrounding elm trees, form a conspicuous object in the landscape for some miles around.

Our first thoughts on entering the town naturally recur to the memory of John Kyrle, the philanthropist of the place. The house in which the good man lived, was lately used as an inn, but is now a private dwelling. Here the poet Coleridge wrote the following lines:—

‘ Richer than miser o’er his countless hoards,
Nobler than kings, or king-polluted lords,
Here dwelt the Man of Ross! O traveller, hear!
Departed merit claims a reverent tear.
Friend to the friendless, to the sick man health,
With generous joy he viewed his modest wealth;
He heard the widow’s heav’n-breathed prayer of praise;
He marked the sheltered orphan’s tearful gaze.
Or, where the sorrow-shrivelled captive lay,
Poured the bright blaze of Freedom’s noon-tide ray.
But if, like me, through life’s distressful scene,
Lonely and sad thy pilgrimage hath been,
And if, thy breast with heart-sick anguish fraught,
Thou journeyest onward, tempest-tossed in thought,
Here cheat thy cares! in generous visions melt,
And dream of goodness thou hast never felt.’

The memory of so truly benevolent a being as John Kyrle is, indeed, a refreshing subject for contemplation; and well would it be for the happiness of this world, if his example

were as much followed as his native town is frequented; but I fear few of the wealthy tourists, who come to look at his old house, and enjoy the lovely prospect from his elm-shaded walk, ever yield honour due to the *practically* Christian character of the man, whose goodness bought him immortality; and still fewer will be found, who, touched by the history of such unobtrusive worth, resolve thenceforth to 'go and do likewise.'*

The Church which he frequented, and where he lies interred, is a handsome and venerable-looking structure, with a lofty spire. The churchyard is extensive, and adorned by some particularly fine elm trees, planted by the good Man of Ross; I never remember having been so much pleased with a church and burial ground as with this; the gray, gothic architecture, the ancient tombs, and the heaved turf, where so many nameless dead are laid at rest,—the grand trees, rustling in the wind above, and the glorious prospect spread out all around,—it was the very poetry of earth—its beauty and its sadness.

There is a fanciful, and, as it seems, true story related of these elm trees. It is said that after the death of their benevolent planter, an official and officious person committed the cruel sacrilege of cutting down some of the good man's favourite trees; immediately upon which, there sprung up within the church, and within the very pew he occupied, three young elm shoots, which with almost superstitious reverence are now preserved and cherished. They overshadow the two tall windows in that corner of the church, and form a verdant canopy over the wonted seat of the good man. It is one of

* John Kyrle was born at Dymock, in Herefordshire, in 1637, and died in 1724.





the most strange and beautiful whims of nature I ever knew. The marble bust and monument in the chancel, tinged with the passing sunlight through gorgeous stained glass, had nothing of interest for me compared with this simple but touching memento. The 'Man of Ross's Walk' adjoins the churchyard, from which it is entered, and commands an extensive and quiet, rich landscape, with the Wye forming a bay-like curve at the foot of the rock on which the Church and Prospect Walk are situated.

From Ross I made an excursion to May Hill, another spot considered by antiquaries as the probable site of the ancient Ariconium of Antoninus, which Camden fixes at Kenchester, but which Horseley removes to the neighbourhood of Ross.* It has evidently been an important Roman station, and commands a view of an immense extent of country, though the extraordinary flatness and breadth of its summit hides the middle landscape, and only allows the spectator to enjoy the distance, and the immediate foreground of gorse, heather, and the crowning crest of fir-trees, which are visible

* The Rev. D. T. Fosbroke, in his account of Ross, says—'The earliest historical notice of this vicinity, is the existence of a petty kingdom, called *Ertie*, or *Ereyck*, being, according to Mr. Leman, the Celtic Aricon, to which the Romans added *ium*, for the purpose of designating the metropolis. From the British term came the *Yrchingafeld* of the Saxon Chronicle, the *Arconefelde* of Domesday, and the present district of *Archenfield*, which had formerly distinct and peculiar privileges. Through the abundance of wood, the Romans made *Ariconium* (now the Bolitree, near Ross) the site of a foundry, still indicated by large remains of scoriæ, other tokens having been destroyed. Ariconium, says a silly tradition, was destroyed by an earthquake; but the greater probability is, that the earthquake was a dreadful irruption of the Danes, in 918, who then seized Bishop Cameleac in *Yrchingafeld*, and carried him off to their ships for the sake of ransom. The inhabitants of Ariconium might then, under the hope of greater security, and easier escape across the river, have removed to the present site, perhaps called Ross from *rhoos*, 'moist, wet,' though the name is by some derived from Vallis Rosina, &c.

for many miles round. The Severn, and the great plain of Gloucester, form the most interesting portion of the panorama, at the extremity of which, faintly distinguished from the Cotteswold Hills, rise the spires and towers of Gloucester; and the Malvern Hills, on the north-east, wear a more broken and picturesque form than from any other spot whence I have viewed them.

A pleasant evening walk from 'mine Inn,' below the red cliffs at Ross, and over the Wye bridge, brought me to the small hamlet of Wilton, and I wandered about, seeking a road to the ruins of its old Castle, parts of which are seen from the river and bridge. Taking advantage of a stranger's privilege, I accosted a gentleman, whose benevolent countenance augured well for my intended queries, and 'asked my way' to the Castle, whither he kindly accompanied me. He led me into a private garden, where stands the ruin—*re-ruined* entirely. A house has been erected after the fashion of a modern dress-waistcoat dove-tailed into a suit of mail; and there it stands, in all the obtrusive, insolent bravado of upstart ignorance, jostling the hoary and crumbling fabric, with its pert venetian blinds and verandas; mocking its by-gone dignity with a pointed sash-window, and forcing one tower to masquerade in the disguise of a thatched summer house! The area of the Castle serves as garden ground, and flaunting dahlias flourish luxuriantly among the strangely-abused memories of former days. I could be Quixotic in defence of the rights of poor old Wilton Castle—not that I am a lover of any thing of feudal tyranny, darkness, and oppression of soul and body—that iron vassalage of by-gone days—God forbid! But I hate to see any thing abused in its adversity; and ruins are beautiful bits of poetry and

morality,—they father many a delicate fancy, and tell, eloquently silent, many a stern truth. They do not occupy much of our land-room, and surely ought to be allowed that little ungrudgingly, without being either pulled down or filled up like the one in question. The few fragments that have escaped the ‘improvements’ of these modern times, are picturesque and ivy-grown, and their lovely situation, on the bank of the river, surrounded by fine trees, ought to render them interesting.

Returning to Ross by twilight, I ended my day’s wanderings; and on the following morning rose with the intention of spending some hours at Goodrich, but the rain poured down in torrents, and philosophy was at Zero. At length, by mid-day, a gleam appeared, and I gladly proceeded to Goodrich Court. I may well apply to this mansion the term used regarding Abbotsford; this is, indeed, ‘a romance in stone and lime.’ But the characters of the romances are different. In Abbotsford is united the castle and the monastery, with something of the fanciful, fairy spirit of Border legends. At Goodrich Court we dream of Froissart and his chronicles of arms and chivalry. Sir S. R. Meyrick formed the design from a variety of sources, which furnished detached portions and different architectural details of the period between the first and third Edwards, the prevailing style of which he intended to imitate, arranging and disposing the whole so as to combine characteristic features from actual buildings, in an edifice of unique design, and admirably calculated for the reception and display of the magnificent collection of antique armour in the possession of its accomplished resident. The extreme beauty of the spot on which the Court is erected, being ‘the summit of a bold

promontory, with a rich hanging wood beneath, reaching to the water's edge, and backed by copped and other hills, offers a most attractive subject for the pencil.' The splendid plate which will, far better than any written description, convey an idea of the reality to my readers, also includes a view of the adjoining eminence, on which stand the hoary and shattered but beautiful ruins of the old Castle of Goodrich.

Goodrich Court, though far more consistent in its character than most other modern fortress-mansions, has some of the incongruities of its class, which it is perhaps impossible and not desirable altogether to avoid. Driving along the smoothly-gravelled 'Wardour's Terrace,' the visiter arrives at the principal gateway, which is approached over a drawbridge, (not intended to be raised) and is furnished with a portcullis and flanked by two round towers. The surrounding battlements, turrets, loopholes, and machiolations look bristlingly on the defensive, while the small dry moat, laid with velvet turf, and the fair flower beds perfuming the quiet air around, are out of keeping, though agreeably so. On the left of the entrance is Sussex Tower, the lofty bartizans and spires of which are visible from many distant points, also the keep and eastern towers. For an exact account of the various apartments, and their decorations, my readers must refer to the local guide-books, and a proper description of the extensive, and, I should imagine, unrivalled collection of armour and antiquities, will only be found in the able works of the erudite owner. I can but briefly enumerate a few of the objects which chiefly attracted my attention. Among the first, as being first seen, ranks the splendid knocker, designed by Giovanni di Bologna; next, the extremely beautiful antique lamp in the Entrance Hall; one of the most perfect specimens of ancient art found in Hercu-



H. F. K. 1860

THE RIVER AND THE MOUNTAINS





laneum. In the Asiatic Armoury, the Indian accoutrements, and delicately carved ivory idols, are highly interesting; nor less so the South-sea Room, containing the rude and fearful weapons, feathered cloaks, &c. of the islanders. In Henry the Sixth's Gallery, stands the renowned and magnificent suit of armour once belonging to the Duke of Ferrara, to whom Tasso addressed his *Jerusalem Delivered*; it is embossed with bas-reliefs, and inlaid with gold. The Banqueting Hall contains a few interesting pictures, and commands fine views of the Wye and surrounding country. The Hastilude Chamber is fitted up so as in a limited space to represent a joust, with the royal box, &c., though the contiguity of the knight's thick spears to the royal eyes has a somewhat awkward effect on the spectator. We next pass to the Grand Armoury, where the arranged suits of armour are highly instructive and interesting, and would be much more so, but for the manner in which they are disposed for exhibition.

I think this splendid collection seriously injured by the puerile style of its arrangement: such as the introduction of dilapidated doll faces into the visors; and where armour does not entirely compose a costume, the eking it out by *drapery* of coarse chintz, or print, carrying imagination at one cruel whisk, from dreams of courts and tournaments to Betty Chambermaid's last new gown. To me, the sight of a vacant suit of armour is a strange and solemn thing, at least a creator of solemn and not unprofitable thoughts, gazing, as I do, on the garb of one whose life was passed, and perhaps lost, in destroying his brother men; whose firm-set limbs and iron sinews seemed to defy time and death; who would kill a legion rather than lay down his bloody sword, and who now—aye, long ago, has become but nameless dust; 'how are the mighty fallen!'

But here such dreams have no place, no birth ; the moral, poetical, and historical associations which accompany these memories of the olden time, are driven away by the incongruous exhibition of a pointed collar snipped in cambric paper, falling over a coat of mail, or a set of cross-poles bearing hats and other articles of clothing, set up and denominated as ‘ King Charles’ men-at-arms.’ All the *reality* of the collection is sterlingly precious and beautiful : the grievance is, that a compromise should be attempted between knowledge and ignorance, by effigizing the dead hero in the painted doll. ‘ The armour, and nothing but the armour,’ would be my prayer, and that of all persons whose opinions I have heard on the subject ; and awful would be the procession of wire and wooden frames, calico buff-coats, paper-lace ruffs, dilapidated human faces, and tailless steeds, which the passing of our reform bill at Goodrich Court would send forth on their expulsion from office.

Another circumstance very annoying amid one’s enjoyment in this palace of antiquity, is the severe reflection on the ignorant and mischievous propensities of my countrymen *and* women, conveyed in the numberless tickets and placards scattered through all the public rooms, reiterating the request, ‘ *Don’t touch any thing.*’ It is pinned to banners, wafered to walls, stitched on hero’s garments, and hung up in all directions ; added to this, bars slung across the different public apartments make us feel absolutely on trespass, even with the Lady Seneschal at our heels. This caution may be, I fear *is*, required for the protection of such invaluable property ; but it is a foul blot on the English character that it should be so ; that a collector of any objects of interest, who is disposed to allow the public the gratification of in-

specting them, should have reason to fear the slightest injury being done to his collection by the persons who profit by his courtesy. It is not thus among our continental neighbours ; galleries, gardens, and museums are freely and *safely* opened to the public, who have better sense and better feeling than to injure or destroy what is thus entrusted to their care. The superiority of English honour and English refinement is much vaunted ; let it blush at its inferiority *here*, and amend.

In the Library is some very fine oak carving ; and I was highly gratified at seeing two miniatures by Holbein, the portrait of Henry VIII., painted for Anne of Cleves, and that of the fair lady herself, both enclosed in delicately carved ivory cases. A lovely portrait of Nell Gwynn, by Sir Peter Lely, and other interesting pictures adorn ‘ Charles the Second’s Gallery.’ The Dining-room also contains fine pictures. The Breakfast-room is an elegant bijou apartment, fitted up in the style of Queen Anne’s time, with embroidered satin draperies, gilded tables, mirrors, &c., and a ceiling painted by Briggs. In the Drawing-room, which is octagonal, the style of Edward II. is preserved ; the walls are painted ‘ after the manner of that period,’ with legendary stories ; the fireplace and centre tables are likewise copied from veritable antiques. One brief visit affords but little time to survey the multitude of antiquities of all ages, climes, and kinds, amassed together within this historical mansion, and but little should I gratify my readers by the bare catalogue, could I give it them.

We must hasten now from the new Court and its old treasures, and enter the tenantless halls of the Castle, which, seated in its faded but impressive grandeur on an adjoining

height, forms a chief object in the delightful landscape commanded by the windows and grounds of the Court. A winding road, which, in honour of its condition for foot passengers, Tony Lumpkin might correctly denominate 'Squash Lane,' and a few fields, with particularly primitive stiles, lead to the ruins. On a near approach the exterior of Goodrich is less striking than that of many other castles, except the gateway, which is eminently beautiful, flanked by its ivy-grown towers, and showing beneath its arches the lofty window of the opposite tower, and through that, the distant Court and its girdling woods. The construction of this fortified entrance is very remarkable. It appears to have been one of the additions made to the fortress down to the time of Henry VI., the keep, of which I shall speak hereafter, having been erected antecedently to the Conquest. The entrance, commencing between two semicircular towers of unequal dimensions, near the east angle, is continued under a dark vaulted passage, to an extent of fifty feet. Immediately before this entrance, and within the space enclosed by the fosse, was a very deep pit, hewn out of the solid rock, formerly crossed by a drawbridge, which is now gone, but which appears to have exactly fitted, and to have closed, when drawn up, the whole front of the gateway between the towers. About eleven feet within the passage was a massy gate; this gate and the drawbridge were defended on each side by loopholes, and over head by rows of machioliations, for pouring down melted lead, scalding water, &c., on the heads of assailants. Six feet and a half beyond this was a portcullis, and about seven further, a *herse*, (a kind of portcullis,) the space between these was again protected by





loopholes. About two feet more inward, was another strong gate ; and beyond this, on the right, a small door leading to a long narrow gallery, formed in the thickness of the wall, which was the means of access to the eastern tower, and commanded the steep brow of the hill towards the north-east.* This narrow dark winding passage I explored under the guidance of the old Deputy-governor of the Castle, and was not a little amused by his great anxiety to make me thoroughly conversant with his lore, touching the wonders and merits of Goodrich. On my remarking that portions of the ruins reminded me strongly of Kenilworth, the old man exclaimed, ‘ Well now, there’s a many as sayin’ so, but I don’t think any castle *can* be purtier nor *our’s*; some sayin’ Ragland’s very fine—I never saw it ; but I don’t believe there’s e’er a one on ’em comes up to our’n’. My unfeigned delight in surveying the remains of *his* castle very soon pacified my guide’s amusing jealousy.

The view from the summit of the ancient Saxon Keep is extremely beautiful and varied, combining the many graceful bends of the river, and rich scenery around. The styles of many distant eras are discernable in the architecture of the various parts of Goodrich. The Keep, the most ancient, is less injured by time than any other portion, and is as richly draperied by delicate ferns, as are many other parts with massive ivy, and silvery-seeded clematis. The latter enrobes several entire towers, and is indescribably beautiful.

* A small fort commanding the ford at this spot, existed previously to the Conquest, and a Domesday proprietor, named Godric, seems the probable originator of its present title. Goodrich Castle, after passing through many noble families, was at the time of the civil war, successively garrisoned by both parties ; but in 1646, being held for the King by Sir Richard Lingen, it was besieged and dismantled by Colonel Birch and his Parliamentarians, since which time it has not been restored.

CHAPTER VIII.

ROSS TO MONMOUTH BY WATER—COLDWELL ROCKS—SYMOND'S YAT—DOWARD—
MONMOUTH—RAGLAND.

‘Down the swift river, the full-flowing river,
Our light-freighted bark glideth on ;
While in the waves ever, the tree-shadows quiver—
Oh! who can be gloomy?—not one.

What day is too long, with the merry boat-song,
Bright sunshine and blessed blue sky—
While meadow flowers young, o’er the sedgy banks flung,
Nod and laugh as we gaily glide by.’

EARLY the following morning I entered a boat at Ross, on my way to Monmouth. My ‘light bark’ was not much unlike a gondola, when its tarpauling cover was spread over the framework; but being favoured by a radiantly bright morning, I preferred sitting under the skeleton, and enjoying the charming scenes around me. A table in the centre of the part allotted to passengers, and cushioned seats around, made this small floating parlour a most commodious conveyance. After dropping past Wilton Castle, and beneath the bridge, we soon came in sight of Goodrich Court and Castle, well worthy their far-known fame. Richly





wooded hills, well sprinkled with white cottages, whose thin blue smoke curled softly upward, often rose in front. Kerne Bridge being passed, and its surrounding bosky hills and sunshiny meadows, Bishop's Wood house appeared. The grounds of Courtfield skirt the river for some distance, adding the great charm of their magnificent ornamental timber to the landscape. Passing the village of Lidbrook, where a steep tram-road from Dean Forest brings coal for embarkation on the Wye, I gained a good view of Courtfield house. Henry V. is said to have been nursed in a more ancient house on the same site, belonging to the Countess of Salisbury, (obt. 1395) whose supposed monument in the neighbouring little church of Welsh Bicknor I landed to examine. Sir S. R. Meyrick has somewhat shaken the faith of the learned as respects this monument, pronouncing the costume to be of the time of Edward I. A winged angel on either side the head have been, absurdly enough, supposed to represent the young Henry and his fellow-suckling.

Approaching the foot of Coldwell Rocks, a most sublime and majestic scene presents itself. These grand, and in some places precipitous, limestone cliffs are overhung with richly varied tufts of oak and underwood, traversed by deep dells and gullies. The smooth, luxuriant hill called Rosemary Topping, beautifully contrasts with and enhances the magnificent sternness of these wild crags. For a considerable distance they present one continued panorama of grandeur and sublimity. Arrived at the landing place for the ascent to Symond's Yat, I disembarked, and wended my weary way to the summit, through a wood abounding in curious plants, and gay with a rich profusion of wild Autumn berries. On attaining the small platform of rock crowning the narrow

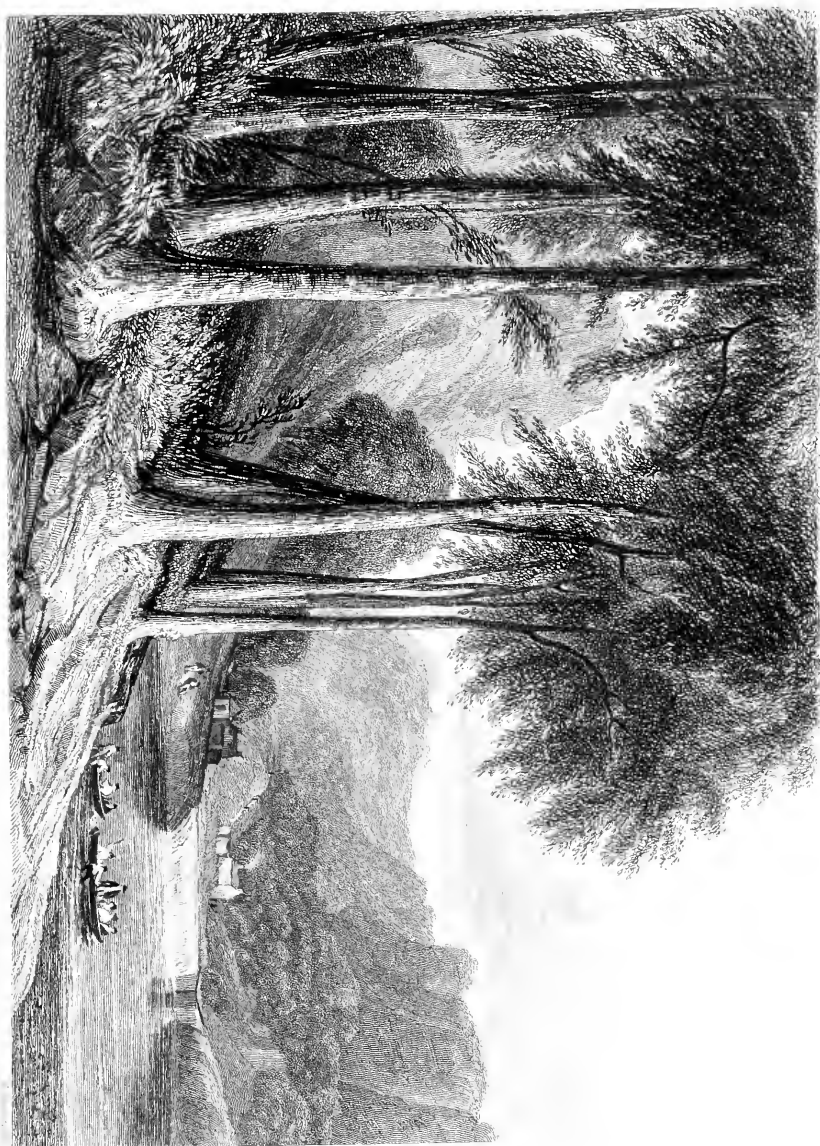
ridge round which the river makes the extraordinary circuit of four miles, a view of great grandeur displayed itself, and reclining on the turf, telescope in hand, I quietly enjoyed it. The chief eminences in Radnor and Brecknockshire, the Malvern Hills, Black Mountains, and the immediately near range of limestone crags, with the river winding brightly beneath, and distant spires and towers peeping above their encircling woods, all lit up in fair sunshine, made a grand and interesting picture.*

A double intrenchment runs across this

‘Tower of rock, that seems to cry,
Go round about me, neighbour Wye.’

A few coracles were on the river, with their still, patient occupants, the salmon fishers. Passed round the peninsula-shaped flat beyond Symond's Yat, and by the diminutive church of Whitchurch. Large masses of rock are here insulated by the river, which vainly chafes and foams among them. The Great Doward Hill soon rose in all its grandeur on the right, galleried throughout by quarries, and rendered wildly beautiful by the misty smoke from its numerous kilns and cottages, which are sprinkled all over its fantastic heights, wherever a tiny cabin can find room to perch itself. The New Weir here received our boat in its swelling eddy, and the foaming, roaring water added not a little to the interest of

* Upon the Little Doward, a hill of peculiarly fine outline, viewed in front from the Monmouth road, are the interesting remains of a British camp. Three circular terraces wind up to the summit. It is a valuable relic of British fortification, where Caractacus probably posted himself, for how otherwise are the adjacent Roman camps on the Great Doward and Symond's Yat to be accounted for? Ostorius probably attempted to force him by the Great Doward, but apparently did not succeed, and being compelled to cross the river encamped at Symond's Yat. The inference is drawn from the circumstance of the Gauls having taken up a position protected by a river, where even Cæsar declined action.—*Rev. T. D. Fosbroke.*



the scene.* Lofty rocks now rise on both sides, robed in infinite varieties of wood and shrub of every imaginable tint, showing the pale grey of the limestone contrasted richly by the bright red, green, yellow, and brown of the Autumn foliage. Many portions of the craggy cliffs have the appearance of ruined castles and towers. Three remarkable ones are named the three sisters, Ann, Mary, and Elizabeth, right venerable personages. King Arthur, that hero of 'oldenne tyme,' has a hall and a chair named in his honour in this neighbourhood; the latter is a semicircular hollow near the Little Doward, on which are the remains of a British camp. Here, in a spot called Martin's Pool, the river is said to be seventy feet deep. Handsome and tasteful residences now frequently appear on the wooded banks, among which the Leys, Vaga cottage, and Newton hall are the chief.

The approach to Monmouth is very pleasing, and the town occupies a position of great beauty, lying in a valley surrounded by hills, and nearly encircled by two rivers, the Wye and Monnow. The few remains of the Castle stand upon an eminence to the south of the Monnow. A British fortress is said to have existed here previously to the Roman conquest, and to have been occupied by

* Mr. Gilpin, an accurate observer of the beautiful and sublime in landscape, who published an account of the River Wye many years ago, says—'The river is wider than usual in this part, and takes a sweep round a towering promontory of rock, which forms the side screen on the left, and is the grand feature of the view. On the right side of the river the bank forms a woody amphitheatre, following the course of the stream round the promontory: its lower skirts are adorned with a hamlet, in the midst of which volumes of thick smoke thrown up at intervals from an iron forge, as its fires receive fresh fuel, add double grandeur to the scene.'

Now, however, all is tranquil, save the noise of the rapid current over the bed of the river where the Weir was erected—the works are pulled down, and the population gone. To view the scene to the best advantage, the tourist should descend from the summit of Symond's Yat by the winding road traversed by the mules which brought coal from the forest when the works were used.

the Saxons. It is supposed to have been rebuilt by John, Baron of Monmouth, who, in 1257, resigned it to Prince Edward, afterwards Edward I. In 1265, Simon, Earl of Leicester, besieged Gilbert, Earl of Gloucester, and levelled the castle with the ground. It was, however, rebuilt, and devolved to John of Gaunt, whose son, Henry of Bolingbroke, was afterwards Henry IV., during whose reign this fortress became the birth-place of Henry V., consequently surnamed Harry of Monmouth.

The Priory was founded by Withenoc de Monmouth, in the reign of Henry I., for Benedictine Monks, and suppressed at the dissolution. Traces of it are visible to the north of St. Mary's church. The Priory-house contains an apartment, celebrated as the library of Galfredius Arthurius, Bishop of St. Asaph, much better known by the name of Geoffrey of Monmouth. He is supposed to have been educated in the Benedictine Monastery of this place. He was appointed Archdeacon of Monmouth in 1251, and shortly afterwards created Bishop of St. Asaph. He translated the History of Britain from the ancient British language into the Latin, and also the amusing prophecies of Merlin from British verse into Latin prose.* Our great Welsh hero, Owain Glyndwr, was much indebted to these prophetic writings, as they rendered him essential service, by favouring his high pretensions to sovereignty. The veracity of Geoffrey, as an historian, has been doubted by many; Camden remarks, that his relation of Brutus and his successors ought to be totally disregarded. It

* Heath makes Geoffrey of Monmouth and Giraldus the same man! vide *History of Monmouth* by this author, who would fain fix counsellors' wigs upon conspicuous and picturesque points of the rocks at Coldwell.





may, however, be observed in favour of this writer, from the testimony of Giraldus Cambrensis, his contemporary, that, at that period, the Welsh bards and minstrels, from early traditional accounts received and transmitted with a mixture of religious reverence and awe, solemnly repeated, the genealogy of their princes and heroes, from Roderic the Great to Æneas, and from Æneas literally to Adam. If this should be thought not altogether to add much to their probable authenticity, it will serve to warrant the introduction of the history, to show, at least, that he was not the author of the fiction; and, in tracing the origin of nations, tales to the full as fabulous, and much more so, are to be met with in the pages of many of our gravest and approved writers. To our own few early historians we owe much, and amongst these Geoffrey deserves every respect, and we are bound to regret, that in succeeding times, the best histories of this country will be found to have been the labours of foreigners.

The celebrated ‘Monmouth caps,’ mentioned by Shakspeare and so many old authors, are no longer the staple commodity at this place, the manufacture having been removed to Bewdley; but the chapel, formerly belonging to the members of the ‘craft,’ still exists. The walks around Monmouth are extremely pleasant, and Chippenham Meadow, which at the time of my visit presented a brilliant appearance, from the races then being held upon it, forms a fashionable evening promenade.

The Kymin, about a mile and a half from Monmouth, is a lofty eminence rising from the Wye banks, surmounted by a rich wood, and a naval monument, in commemoration of British admirals. The view from the summit is extensive

and beautiful; a small pavilion has been erected here for the accommodation of visitors. The Buckstone, a mile south of the Kymin, is a famous rocking-stone of the Druids. Such stones formed an important feature in ancient Celtic superstitions, and were used in divination, the vibration determining the oracle. Their sound when violently pushed very probably served to arouse the country on an enemy's approach; and the passage or path invariably found encircling them, intimates the perambulation to have been a sacred performance. These oracular stones are frequently alluded to in the poems of Ossian, the originals of which, though doubtlessly much embellished by Macpherson, are to be found in the Highlands. The situation of the stone near Monmouth, was evidently chosen because it could be conspicuous for miles around.

Quitting Monmouth, on an excursion to Ragland Castle, my way lay over a considerable hill about a mile from the town, commanding a most lovely and luxuriant landscape. From this eminence the rich valley in which Monmouth is situated, and the beauties of the surrounding country, are seen to great advantage.

The Castle lies a short distance from the village of Ragland, on an elevated site, and forms the most picturesque and beautiful ruin I am any where acquainted with. It may rather be termed a castellated house than a castle, and is, in many parts, in good preservation, much of the elaborate carved stone-work remaining as sharp and distinct as when first erected. The general view, obtained on entering the gates, is truly magnificent. Immediately in front is the grand entrance, guarded by three massive towers, their summits gracefully adorned with ivy, which







hangs in massive drapery over the dim Gothic arch, through which a glimpse is gained of the decayed splendour of the inner court. The citadel, with its bastions, stands on the left; its surrounding moat is adorned by trees and shrubs, springing from crevices in the mouldering walls, and dipping their branches in the reflecting water below. A geometrical staircase leads to the top, where an extensive and pleasing view may be enjoyed.

Ragland does not claim so many antiquarian honours as some other castles, not having been erected prior to the reign of Henry V. ; many additions were made to it in that of Elizabeth, and also so late as Charles I. The fashion of the arches, doors, windows, &c., are progressively of the intermediate ages. Its construction may be ascribed principally to Sir William ap Thomas, and his son the Earl of Pembroke ; additions were made by the Earls of Worcester, and the citadel and outworks were probably added by the Marquis of Worcester, who last resided in this sumptuous mansion.

During the civil commotions Charles I. made several visits to Ragland Castle, and was entertained with great magnificence. At one time the King, being apprehensive lest the stores of the Castle should be consumed by his suit, empowered the Marquis of Worcester to exact from the country such provisions as were necessary for his remuneration. ‘I humbly thank your Majesty,’ he answered, ‘but my castle would not long stand if it leaned upon the country; I had rather be brought to a morsel of bread, than that any morsels of bread should be *exact*ed from others.’ A speech worthy of remembrance and appreciation.

The extreme beauty of parts of this grand edifice no pen,

and but few pencils, can justly present to those who know not the reality.* The Fountain Court (so called from a fountain of a white horse, long since departed) is singularly beautiful; and the unobtrusive and truly good taste which has in some places added the loveliness and fragrance of sweet flowers, roses, jasmine, &c., among the ‘clamb’ring ivy,’ is extremely pleasing. The space of ground within the castle walls is upwards of four acres. A smoothly-turfed raised terrace surrounds the moat; and stately pageantries of olden days seem to revive from their long sleep and airily glide before us while pacing along its quiet expanse. The Grand Hall has been cruelly disfigured by a recent daubing of the walls to imitate wainscot, done in preparation for a great banquet given a short time since by the country gentlemen to Lord Granville Somerset, one of their members.†

‘Majestic Ragland! harvests wave

Where thund’ring hosts their watchword gave.

* * * * *

No smoke ascends; the busy hum

Is heard no more; no rolling drum,

No high-toned clarion sounds alarms,

No banner wakes the pride of arms!

But ivy, creeping year by year,

Of growth enormous, triumphs here.’

Returning to Monmouth, Troy House claims a passing notice, for the sake of its boasted antiquities,—viz., the cradle

* It may not be amiss here to mention the obligations which the Proprietors of this work are under to that highly esteemed artist, and faithful delineator of scenery, Mr. David Cox, whose pencil has enriched and enhanced the value not only of this volume, but also of that recently published on the Northern part of the Principality.

† The Beaufort Arms, at Ragland, is an excellent house.

of Henry V., apparently a machine of much more recent construction than its assigned era; a suit of armour allotted by tradition to the same Royal hero in his exploits at Agincourt, and a fine carved chimney piece from Ragland Castle, whence doubtless the other two antiques have been obtained, having belonged to some of the Worcester family. An interesting little church at Michelstrey, and a curious cross in the pretty churchyard, where laurels and other evergreens form a garden among the tombs attracted my attention in passing; but nothing worthy of any lengthened description stayed my return to Monmouth, which with its gay race-ground, bright river, and lovely scenery, looked in the distance like Fairy land.

Five miles from Monmouth, at the village of Treleck, are some interesting Druidical and British antiquities, consisting of monumental stones, an enormous tumulus, sacred springs, &c. On the height of Craig y dorth, close by, Owen Glendower obtained a victory.

CHAPTER IX.

REDBROOK—LLANDOGO—BROCKWEIR—TINTERN—WINDCLIFF—PIERCEFIELD—
CHEPSTOW—BRISTOL CHANNEL.

‘THERE’S many a green and lovely spot
Embosom’d in the silent hills,
And many a woodbine-trellis’d cot
By which the wild bird sweetly trills,
Where Quiet sleeps, and Care is calm,
And all the air is breathing balm.

And there the sound of village-bells
In silvery music floats along,
Now lingering o’er the shady dells,
Now mingling with the river’s song,
As near at hand they seem to play,
Or in the distance die away.’*

A CALM bright afternoon of Autumn found me quietly journeying from royal Monmouth towards the end of my pleasant Wye wanderings ; few greater pleasures could befall me than the enjoyment of Nature’s glories so lavishly bestowed around. For a considerable distance the scenery maintained the same rich character. On the Monmouthshire side of the river, a mile below Monmouth, is the Church of Penalt, situated

* Extracted from a small work, recently published, by Thomas Miller, entitled *Beauties of the Country ; or Descriptions of Rural Customs, Objects, Scenery, and the Seasons*. It is the production of a refined mind, and an enthusiastic lover of nature ; full of feeling and genius.

on the side of a wooded eminence, at the back of which is an extensive common.* On this common is a large oak tree, and at its foot a stone seat. When a corpse is brought by, on its way to the place of interment, it is deposited on this stone, and the company sing a psalm over the body. Psalmody over the corpse signified the conquest of the deceased friend over hell, sin, and death. Here is an evident continuation of the *oak* and *stones* of Druidism and Celtic customs, altered into a Christian form. It is ‘the song of bards, which rose over the dead,’ mentioned in Ossian’s death of Cuthullin; an accompaniment of the Irish howl, and altered by the Popes into the Trental.

The road winds for some distance along the side of lofty wooded hills, amid whose deep recesses the woodman’s axe was ringing, followed often by the rustling and heavy fall of some doomed tree; while groups of women and children, busily engaged in barking the fallen timber, sent forth many a peal of merry-cadenced laughter. Instead of detailing these beauties of Autumn in prose, I cannot do better than borrow a description, which in its materials will be found the metrical version of every one’s thoughts in this woodland district.

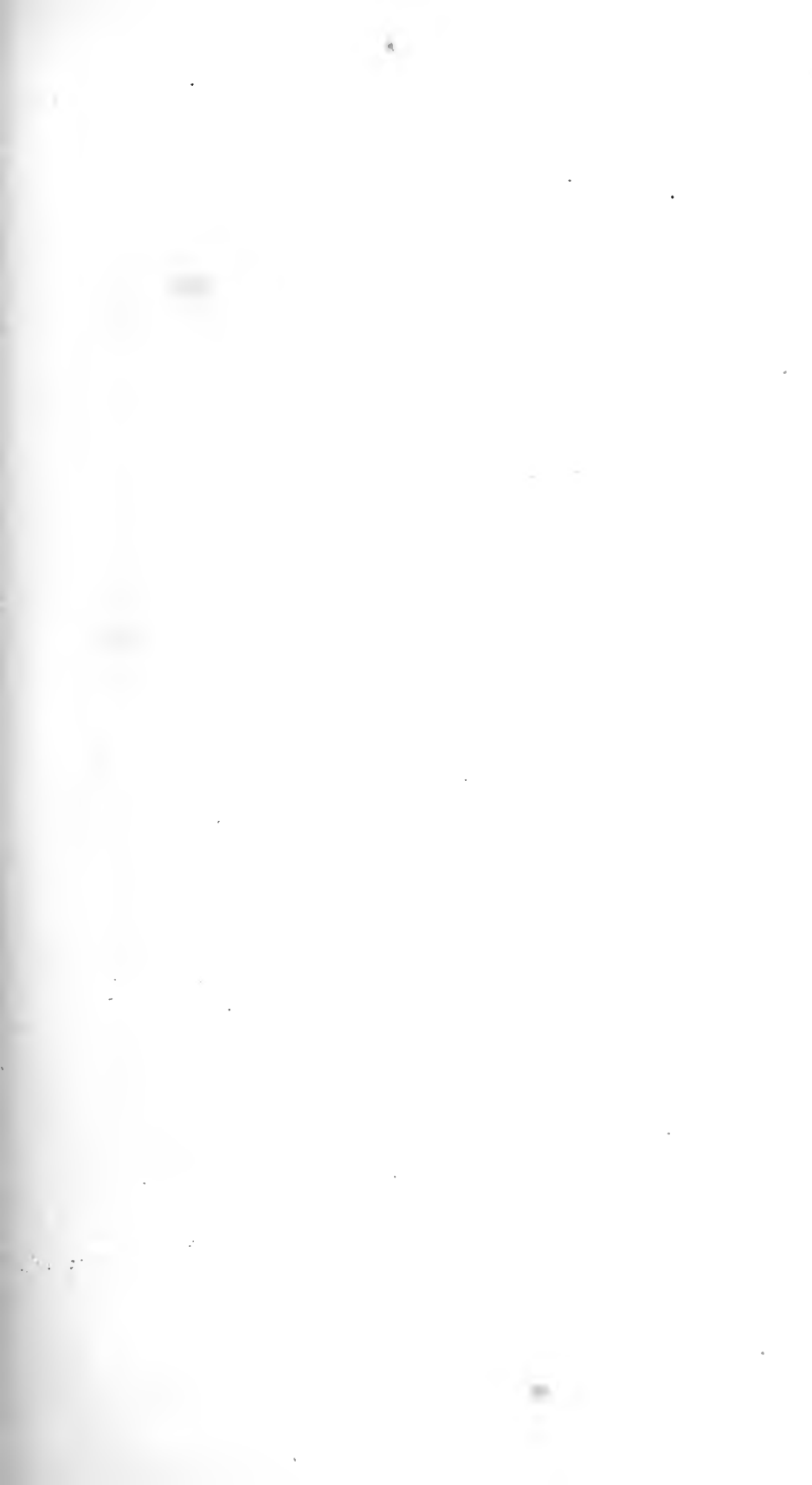
‘Come now to the forest, for Autumn is there,
She is painting its millions of leaves,
With colours so varied, so rich, and so rare,
That the eye scarce her cunning believes:
She tinges and changes each leaf o’er and o’er,
Nor flings it to earth till ’twill vary no more.

* Gray, the poet, was greatly delighted with this neighbourhood. In one of his letters to Dr. Wharton he says, ‘the capital feature of my journey was the river Wye, which I descended in a boat near forty miles. * * * Monmouth lies in a vale, that is the delight of my eyes, and the very seat of pleasure.’

The glorious cedars she ever in vain
Tries to dress in chameleon hue,
For they brave all her arts, and the verdure retain
Of their Spring-time the whole Winter through:
And the sturdy Scot's fir lifts its dark-crested head
Unchanged o'er the path where the brown leaves are spread.*

Upper and Lower Redbrook, beyond Penalt, on the Gloucestershire side, present, in their busy manufacturing activity, a lively, and, in passing, not an unpleasing contrast to the stillness of the wide hills and woods; large iron and tin works being carried on there. The small stream which gives the villages their name, serves to turn several mills; and the little cottages mingled with other more pretending structures in the village-valley, with the woods around, and the Hill of Highbury to the south, (apparently the site of an ancient entrenchment) form an interesting landscape. Passing on by Whitebrook, a busy station of paper mills, Pen y Van Hill appears on the right bank, a large heathery eminence, with a promontory-like summit crowned by a May-pole, around which the merry dances and festivities of the olden time are kept up by the peasantry in due season, with great spirit. Bordering the road, about a mile from

* 'In Autumn's forest scenery both painter and poet find her greatest glory. Every tree, aye, almost every leaf, has a different tint, and the distant woody landscape is touched with every hue of the painter's palette, laid on by the delicate and harmonious finger of Nature. Few districts can display this magnificent effect so perfectly as the scenery on the Wye. The lofty hills which rise on either side of the river's bed, some gradually swelling upwards, and others abruptly lifting their craggy summits towards the sky, are clothed with rich hanging woods, composed of all varieties of trees; and which from the different forms of the ground, catching the sunlight and shadow in every shade and position, offer an unceasing and ever beautiful change of effect; heightened materially by the yew and fir trees, which are irregularly distributed through the woods, and with their steady sombre hues enhance the brilliant beauty of the rest.'—*Romance of Nature*.





H. Warren sculp. J. C. Smith del.

VILLAGE OF BROCKWEIR, ON THE RIVER



where it crosses the river, is a tasty Anglo-Swiss cottage-residence, called 'The Florence,' the shooting seat of George Rooke, Esq., (High Sheriff of Monmouthshire in 1836), a sort of placid '*lion*,' in keeping with the climbing woods and scenery of its site.

Crossing the Wye over a modern and handsome iron bridge, Big's Weir house, the forsaken family mansion of Mr. Rooke's forefathers, with its gardens and terraces, forms an important and pleasing object in the view; behind which rises the lofty Hud-knolls, on whose summit the remains of St. Briavel's Castle still exist. The fortress of St. Briavel's stands on the verge of the forest of Dean; it was built by the Earl of Hereford, in the reign of Henry I., and appears to have been of considerable magnitude and strength; it was formerly the residence of the Lords Warden of the marches of England and Wales; and in it there is still held an occasional court—a remnant of feudal Saxon jurisprudence. From the summit is a rich and varied prospect, including several villages and woods, the bright meandering river, and many distant eminences.

We now enter the village of Llandogo, a place which has a much more picturesque appearance in pencil than in reality. Perhaps from the river it may wear a better aspect; but certainly a *near* view does not add to its charms. After rains a small cascade falls from the heights behind, but at the time of my transit I saw no symptoms of any exhibition at 'Cleddon shoots.' Presently the Wye becomes a tide river, and the former purity of the stream is quite sullied and lost. Brookweir or Brockweir, a prettily situated and populous little hamlet, lies on the left bank, and from the sights and sounds about I should conclude ship-

building to be the reigning craft of the place ; here large trows from Bristol, borne up by the tide, transfer their heavy ladings to lighter vessels. Brockweir is about nine miles from Monmouth, and midway between that town and Chepstow by water.

Following a short bend of the river round some verdant meadows, we enter the small straggling village of Tintern Parva, and passing round another horse-shoe curve reach Abbey Tintern,* amid whose squalid huts and dingy houses the stately ruin of its once, and even still, magnificent Abbey Church rears its proud head.

‘ How many hearts have here grown cold,
That sleep these mouldering stones among !
How many beads have here been told !
How many matins here been sung.

* * * *

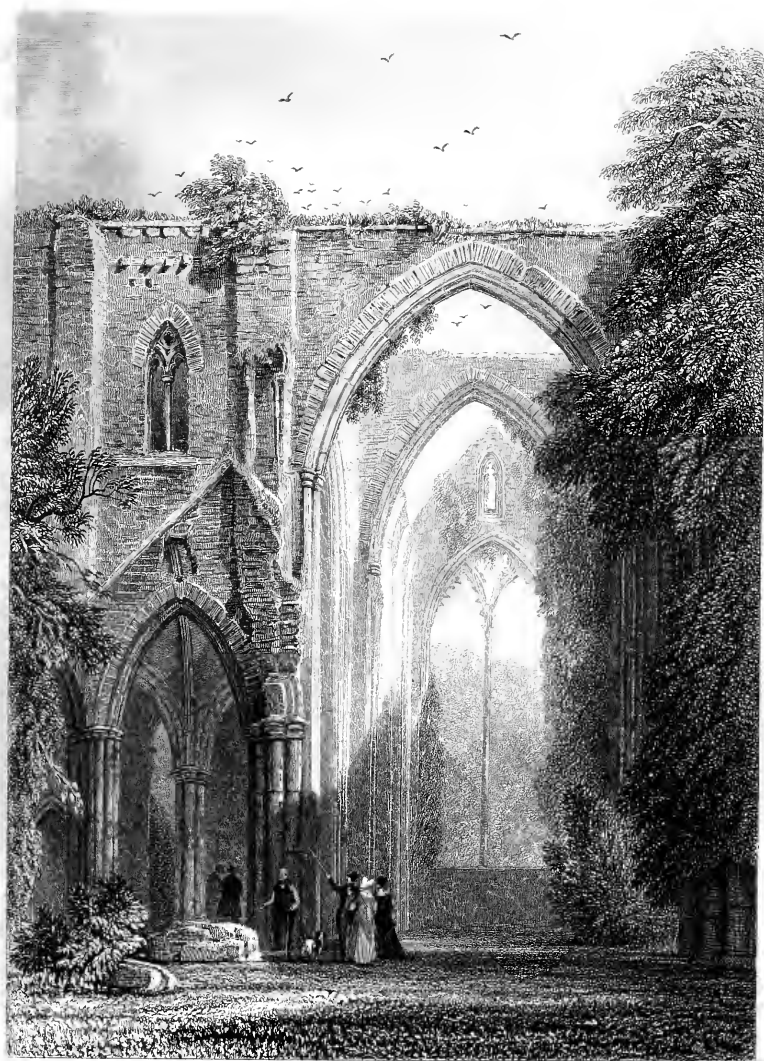
But here no more soft music floats,
No holy anthems chanted now ;
All hush’d except the ring-dove’s notes,
Low murmur’ing from yon beachen bough.’

Seated in a picturesque and mountain-girt valley, close to the Wye, the position of Tintern Abbey is every way calculated to render it a grand landscape beauty ; but the exterior view is rather disappointing than otherwise. Yet, the lack of enthusiasm we feel while on the outside, seems to serve only as a greater enhancement of the glory within.

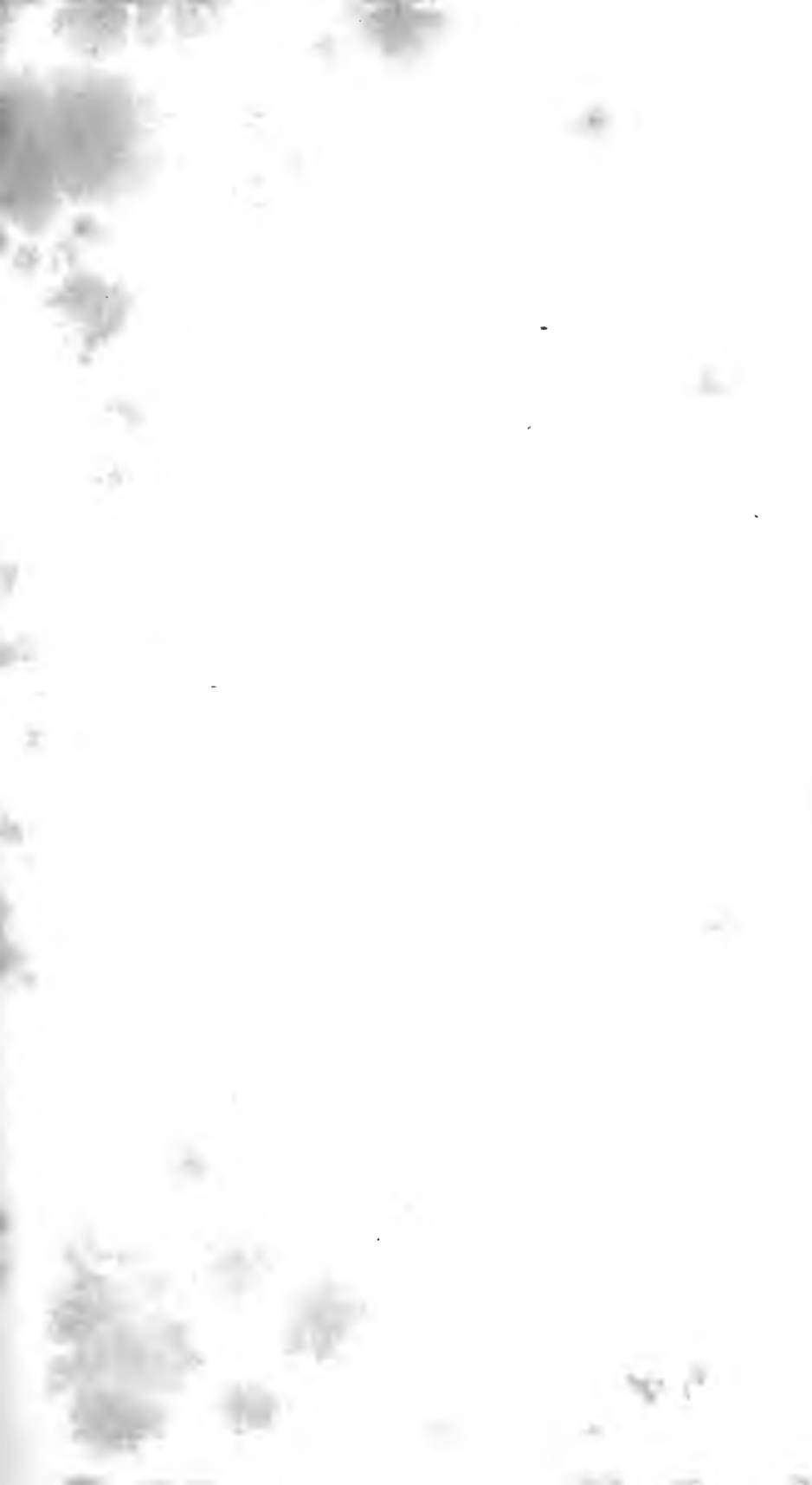
* It is to be regretted that there are not better accommodations for visitors at Tintern. The Beaufort Arms’ Inn is the best house, but it is small and inconvenient. I heard when I was there some talk respecting the erection of a new and splendid hotel, similar to that at Llanberis, in Caernarvonshire.













With eyes bent on the ground, the visiter carefully enters the low western door and then raising his glance and gazing around, he is either less easily excited to admiration, or has more command over himself, than I, if he can refrain from some demonstration of delight. The ruin is two hundred and thirty feet in length, and sixty-three in breadth. The transept is one hundred and fifty feet long.

The architecture is scarcely even defaced by time, but few columns having fallen; and the loss of these is partly hidden, and quite compensated for by the rich, heavy folds of Nature's most graceful drapery, luxuriant ivy, which adorns the lofty aisles and transepts of this majestic edifice, and scarcely suffers us to regret that it is a ruin. Small ferns and flowers of many hues spring from wall and buttress, and the presiding genius of such spots, the fragrant and beautiful wall flower, wanders over arch and window, decking them with its fair garb of green and gold, and crowning the decaying pile as with a halo.

'As the Abbey of Tintern,' says Bucke, in his *Beauties, Harmonies, and Sublimities of Nature*, 'is the most beautiful and picturesque of all our Gothic monuments, so is the situation one of the most sequestered and delightful. One more abounding in that peculiar kind of scenery which excites the mingled sensations of content, religion, and enthusiasm, it is impossible to behold. There every arch infuses a solemn energy, as it were, into inanimate nature: a sublime antiquity breathes mildly in the heart; and the soul, pure and passionless, appears susceptible of that state of tranquillity, which is the perfection of every earthly wish.'

The area of the ruin has been rather too neatly cleared, and is smoothly turfed over, with the prostrate columns

and fragments ranged carefully along. But the very smoothness of the ground, however inconsistent, perhaps only renders the grand proportions of the ‘long drawn aisle’ more striking and beautiful.* Roofed only by the vault of heaven—paved only with the grass of earth, Tintern is probably now more impressive, and truly beautiful, than when ‘with storied windows richly dight;’ for Nature has claimed her share in its adornment, and what painter of glass, or weaver of tapestry, may be matched with her? The singularly light and elegant eastern window, with its one tall mullion ramifying at the top, and leaving the large open spaces beneath to admit the distant landscape, is one chief feature in Tintern. The western window is peculiarly rich in adornment, and those of the two transepts of like character, though less elevated. By means of steps, rails, and planks, all travellers, even elderly ladies, may safely traverse the walls of Tintern from summit to floor, a circumstance greatly extolled by many wanderers in search of the picturesque, but to me, a material detraction from enjoyment; such pretty arrangements and contrivances are quite out of taste with the solemn grandeur of this glorious relic.

Several mutilated monuments lie among the architectural fragments on the turf; one represents a Knight in chain-mail, with crossed legs, as a crusader, or a vowe to take the cross: it is ascribed to Gilbert Strongbow (a hero often spoken of in these pages,) as the Abbey Chronicle mentioned his interment here. Sir S. R. Meyrick considers the effigy to be that of Roger de Bigod.

‘In the year 610, Ceolwulph, King of Wessex, attacked the

* We excuse—perhaps we approve—the neatness that is introduced within. It may add to the beauty of the scene—to its novelty it undoubtedly does.—*Gilpin*.

Britons in Glamorganshire. Theodoric, or Tewdric, the Welsh Roitelet of that country, had resigned the throne to his son Maurice, and 'led an eremitical life among the rocks of Dindyrn.' His former subjects used to say, that he had always been victorious, and that as soon as he showed his face his enemies took to flight. They accordingly dragged him from the desert against his will, and the Royal hermit, once more a general, routed the Saxons at this place. In the action he received a mortal wound on the head, and desired his body to be buried, and a church to be built, upon the spot where he should happen to die. This place was Mathern, near Chepstow; and Bishop Godwin says that he there saw his remains in a stone coffin.*

Tintern Abbey was founded for Cistercian Monks, in 1131, by Walter de Clare, and dedicated to the Virgin Mary. This Walter was a descendant of a family to whom William the Conqueror gave sundry estates in this neighbourhood, together with privilege of possessing all he could wrest from the Welsh. He was succeeded by his brother Gilbert, surnamed Strongbow, first Earl of Pembroke, who confirmed to the monks all the lands, possessions, liberties, and immunities granted by his predecessors. Afterwards the male line failing, the heiress was married to Hugh Bigod, Earl of Norfolk. At the time of the dissolution there were only thirteen inmates. The Abbey and estates were given by Henry the Eighth, to the Earl of Worcester, and subsequently became the property of the Dukes of Beaufort.

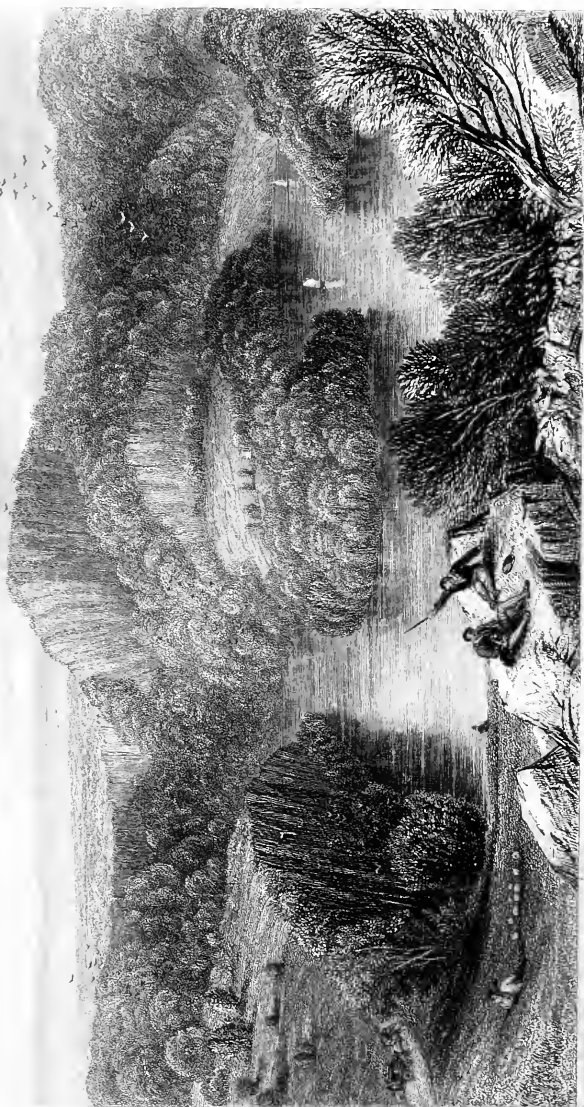
On the opposite bank of the river, an ancient entrenchment runs for some distance along the ridge of the hill, and one angle, commanding a splendid view of Tintern and the

* Rev. T. D. Fosbroke. The original authority borrowed from Coxe.

fair vale around it, is *dignified* by the appellation of the 'Devil's Pulpit.'

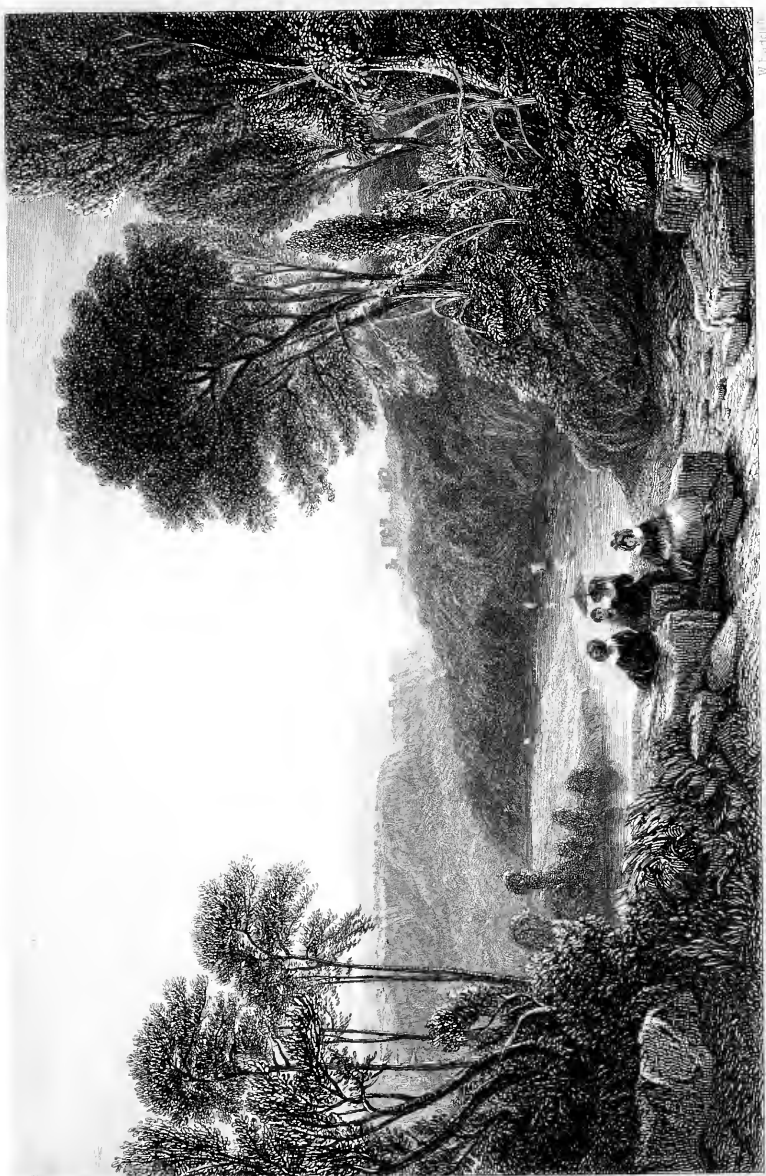
The road gradually ascends beyond Tintern, to a considerable height above the river, embracing grand and varied prospects, combining the rugged cliffs of the opposite bank, partially adorned by wood; the broad quiet river, speckled with its coracles and salmon fishers, looking in the distance like walnut-shells set floating by fairies; and the grand, precipitous rocks, through which the road is made, rising abruptly from the shadowed path, or fantastically grouped with rich wood and waving flowers, stretching towards the blue heaven above.

About three miles from Tintern, a fanciful little habitation, called the 'Moss Cottage,' appears to the right of the road, built by the Duke of Beaufort, for the accommodation of parties visiting Windcliff, to the summit of which grand eminence, several paths lead through the rocks and underwood. The most approved plan is to ascend by a somewhat circuitous, but easy route, nearer St. Arvan's. On gaining the open space, one of the most extensive and beautiful views that can be imagined bursts upon the eye, or rather, I should say, a vast group of views of distinct and opposite character here seem to blend and unite in one. At a depth of about eight hundred feet, the steep descent below presents in some places single projecting rocks; in others, a green bushy precipice. In the valley, the eye follows for several miles the course of the Wye; which issues from a wooded glen on the left hand, curves round a green garden-like peninsula, rising into a hill studded with beautiful clumps of trees, then forces its foaming way to the right, along a huge wall of rock, nearly as high as the point where you stand, and











at length, beyond Chepstow Castle, which looks like a ruined city, empties itself into the Bristol Channel, where ocean closes the dim and misty distance. On the other side of the river, immediately in front, the peaked tops of a long ridge of hills extend nearly the whole district which the eye commands. It is thickly clothed with wood, out of which a continuous wall of rock, festooned with ivy, picturesquely rears its head. Over this ridge (Llancaut Cliffs or Bannagor Crag) you again discern water, the Severn, five miles broad, thronged with white sails, on either side of which is seen blue ridges of hills full of fertility and rich cultivation. The grouping of the landscape is perfect. I know of no picture more beautiful. Inexhaustible in details, of boundless extent, and yet marked by such grand and prominent features, that confusion and monotony, the usual defects of a very wide prospect, are completely avoided. The descent from Windcliff to the Moss Cottage is easily made by means of steps cut in the rock, amid shrubs and wood of great variety and beauty, and presents the landscape in an unceasing diversity of forms.

Piercefield Park, far more the marvel of the last than of the present generation, extends nearly from Windcliff to Chepstow, and is certainly a very pretty specimen of landscape-gardening; but so much puerility of design is mixed with the grand and simple beauty of nature, that a ramble through the three-mile walk of Piercefield Terrace is far less gratifying to a romantic wanderer, than the same distance would prove through the wild greenwood or over the breezy hills. Grottos fabricated where grottos could not naturally exist, with dilapidated giants in stone over their entrance, and inscriptions, not of the highest order of composition,

are very well calculated to make the unlearned stare, and as sure to make the judicious grieve. Many stately and venerable trees adorn the Park, and the enormous growth of the laurels among the underwood is remarkable. A group of rocks peering out from woods skirting the river, are fancifully called the twelve Apostles and St. Peter's thumb, with as little reason, or connection with their namesakes, as such things usually have.

From Llancaut Crag, on the opposite bank, a view is gained little inferior to the one at Windcliff: indeed, the difficulty would be to find a spot in this picture-like neighbourhood whence some grand or picturesque prospect could *not* be enjoyed; and numerous delightfully situated residences prove how well the surrounding beauties are appreciated.

On approaching Chepstow, the main point of attraction is its ancient Castle, a grand ruin crowning the whole length of projecting rock, near which a handsome iron bridge spans the now busy river. For a condensed historical account of this place I shall refer to Mr. Fosbroke's 'Wye':—Chepstow merely signifies market-place; but under the name of Estbrighoel or Striguil, the castle is mentioned in Domesday Book; and is said to have been built by William Fitzosborn, Earl of Hereford, killed in 1070, who erected it out of the ruins of the ancient Caerwent, or *Venta Silurum*. The remains show that the old castle was nearly all taken down, and rebuilt in the thirteenth century. The Duke of Beaufort holds it by descent from the Herberts.

Castles were built according to the form of the ground. That at Caerlaverock being a triangle; and Chepstow is a parallelogram, consisting of successive courts, flanked on the land side by an immense ditch and town walls, and on the

other side by the Wye. The entrance is by a gateway with round towers, between these a machicolation. The ancient gates remain, and consist of planks, covered with iron plates laid upon a strong lattice, and fastened by iron bolts. Within one door is the original wicket, about three feet high, and only eighteen inches wide; requiring no small care to enter its narrow aperture, and climb over its high step without personal detriment.

Passing under the portcullis-arch, the first court is entered, in which the domestic offices were situated; and a tower at the south-east extremity is pointed out as the one in which Henry Marten, one of the judges of Charles I., passed his long period of imprisonment, after his trial. This tower was the Keep, or Citadel. The exterior wall is much more ancient than the one facing the court, and the interior appears to have contained commodious apartments, with spacious fire-places, &c. From this tower, a line of communication, or terraced-walk, runs inside the outer wall, along the whole building, ascending by steps from tower to tower. In the old Norman keep this gallery used in like manner to run under arches round the whole inside. This being a thirteenth century castle, where the defence consisted of numerous towers, (it is said to have contained sixteen,) the line of communication was altered accordingly.

The most lofty and interesting portion of Chepstow Castle, is now called the Chapel; but in castles the chapel was not usually the most striking edifice; and as this beautiful remain has apartments above, there is every reason to think that the lower part was not a chapel, but the Grand Hall, especially as an oriel window, in the style of the thirteenth century, and remarkably beautiful in its rich archi-

tectural decorations, remains to confirm the supposition. A terrace and wall, on the very edge of the cliff, rendered this part impervious to missile weapons. Within the Hall a range of niches are seen, usual in Norman keeps, and called, by presumption, seats for the guard or attendants. While I was looking at the oriel-window from the interior, a fine cream-coloured, downy owl softly sailed round over my head, and casting a look of most grave and intelligent surprise on the intruder, silently floated along, and perching upon the top of the ruin, half in 'an ivy bush,' sat in solemn judgment on my proceedings. Alas ! thought I—for the changes of time ! I am reclining on a moss-grown fragment, amid rank grass and wild flowers, where the stately banquet and the wassail revel were wont to wake the bannered walls with loud-voiced mirth ; and a 'mousing owl' nestles in the mouldering fabric, as sole and undisputed sovereign !

I next explored a damp and gloomy subterranean vault, with a groined roof, and an aperture for the admission of the few rays of light that struggle through the overhanging and entangled ivy and brushwood of the rock in which this dismal apartment is formed ; on peering through the opening, the Wye is seen at a great depth below, rolling heavily along, and the head grows dizzy with gazing from the murky dungeon down the terrific precipice. If this were the prison, surely a brief sojourn in it ought to expiate even a weighty error. I looked at the ponderous rings in the rocky wall, and thought of the 'Prisoner of Chillon,' and then, eagerly bounded up the foot-worn stair into light and liberty—heartily thankful that the years were for ever gone by when feudal tyranny could incarcerate its wretched victims in such dismal durance.





This fortress seems to have been built by Roger de Bigod, about the same time as Tintern Abbey Church. It underwent some partial alterations in the end of the fifteenth century, probably by William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, who was deeply engaged in the wars of York and Lancaster. The town was very strongly walled, and the remains of the fortifications are considerable.

Several monastic and ecclesiastical remains may be found in the neighbourhood. The town occupies a pleasing situation, being built on a hill gradually ascending from the river, amid scenery of the grandest description, but contains few buildings worthy of notice except the Castle. A cell of the foreign Abbey of Cormeilles existed here as early as the reign of Stephen. On the north side of the chapel of this Priory are Roman bricks. The present parish Church includes most of its remains, which form a curious specimen of Norman architecture, particularly the western entrance. The old gate is an interesting piece of antiquity, but much injured by time.

Mr. Wyndham, speaking of this place, says, ‘the beauties are so uncommonly excellent, that the most exact critic in landscape would hardly wish to alter a position in the assemblage of wood, cliffs, ruins, and water.’ And Mr. Coxe observes, ‘I have seldom visited any town whose picturesque situation surpasses that of Chepstow.’

The Bridge over the Wye is substantial and elegant, consisting of five iron arches, resting on stone piers. It is five hundred and thirty-two feet long: the centre arch is one hundred and ten feet, and the other two, on each side of it, seventy and fifty-four feet each in span. It has been remarked, that the tide rises higher here than in any other

place in the kingdom—from fifty to sixty feet. The reason assigned is, that the rocks of Beachley and Aust, which project into the Severn immediately above the Wye, cause such an extraordinary swell that the stream is impelled up this river.

At Chepstow I went on board a steam vessel for Bristol, with the intention of taking the packet from thence to Tenby the following morning. Proceeding steadily down the Wye, it was observable that the fair and clear mountain stream had changed to a broad and stately river. Picturesque cliffs flank her course on the left, displaying a curiously-varied stratification, and crowned with overhanging wood. On the right the gradually rising ground soon exhibited the remains of the ancient town wall, or as it is now called the Port Wall, fortified by numerous round towers, on an apparently artificial elevation. Gliding smoothly on, in the golden light of an Autumn afternoon, I soon found the river widening rapidly; and recognizing Aust Cliffs, and the little ruined shrine of St. Tecla, on its island rock, I knew that the Wye here mingled her waves with those of her sister stream the Severn.

CHAPTER X.

TENBY—CARMARTHEN BAY—LLANSTEPHAN CASTLE—LAMPHEY PALACE—
MANORBEER CASTLE, &c.

THE mellow tints
That time's slow pencil lays from year to year
Upon the ancient towers, spread o'er the wreck
A grateful gloom, and the thick clouds that sweep
Along the darken'd battlements, extend
The melancholy grandeur of the scene.

Sotheby.

EVER retaining its prevailing feature of delightful variety—refreshing to the eye and gladdening to the spirit of the Cambrian rambler—the sea-clipped county of Pembroke, with its fine coast views, its bays, headlands, isles, and ancient castles, offered no unpleasant contrast to the more picturesque hills and woodlands I had left behind. As I set foot on the pier of Tenby there was something, I thought, more English and even aristocratic in the appearance of the place and its inhabitants than is generally met with in the Principality.

The mountainous tracts of Pembrokeshire are confined to the north-east side; the other parts often exhibiting rich tillage land, and fair meadows covered with cattle; though still behind both England and Scotland in the more improved

methods of husbandry. Oxen, jet black, with fine spreading horns—greatly prized by English graziers—frequently supply the place of horses. All the best products of an English farm abound, and yield due returns both at home and from exportation. Nor are the fisheries of Pembrokeshire less fruitful in their amount of profits.

At the south extremity of a small bay, offering an excellent roadstead for vessels, and situated some ten miles from the town of Pembroke, five from Manorbier Castle, and seven from Narberth, stands the well-known watering place of Tenby. After a few pleasant days spent in rambling and sailing, I had sufficient opportunities to estimate its leading points and localities; and no longer felt surprised that it should have become a favourite resort of the gentry of England. With such advantages as pleasant rides and walks, variety of aspect, a safe and fine harbour for the yachts of gentlemen mariners, who do not *always* like to ‘live at home at ease,’ clear sea water, firm and extensive sands, pure air, people very orderly and civil, and no smoky manufactory or copper-faced shipping trade to mar sea associations and gentlemanly ideas; the town, moreover, clean and neat, and therefore an agreeable contrast to the usual run of seaports; surely these are excellencies sufficient to make both Welsh and English fond of Tenby.

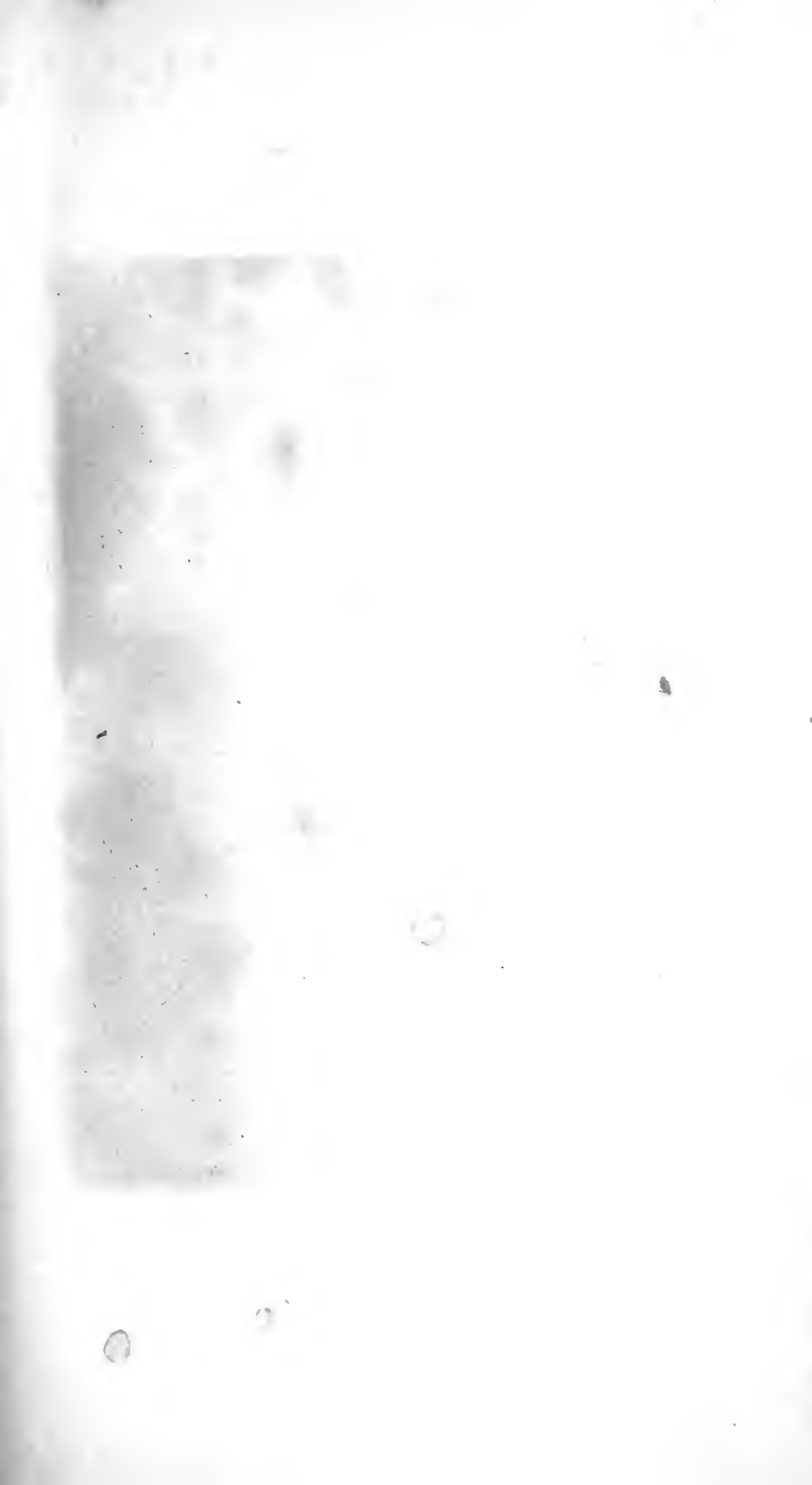
Almost unrivalled for the beauty of its bay, and the extent of its marine prospects, the town, rising upon cliffs, stretches along the sides of a sort of peninsula, towering in a bold but irregular pile above the sea—Caldy Island breaking the violence of the waves from the Atlantic Ocean. The far-extending view from the Castle hill, looking easterly, embracing the whole of Carmarthen Bay, is carried as far as the





W. R. Baker

View looking from a point in the harbor



Gosker Rock, and below it to what are termed the Norton Sands. Passing over numerous bays and promontories the Monkstone Point next is seen; and then again receding, the coast forms the bay of Sandisfoot. The summit of Amroth Castle, the waters of Llaugharne Bay, the mouth of the Towey, the pinnacles of Kidwelly Castle and part of the town are within range of the eye; and afar off the broad promontory of Gowerland, and the towering rock called the Worm's Head, in the Bristol Channel, stretch away to the extreme point of vision.

Scarcely less magnificent the prospect opens towards the south, exhibiting St. Catherine's Rock, on which are the ruins of an antiquated building, Caldy Island, and that of St. Catherine, with the Bristol Channel, and occasionally, on fine days, parts of the Somersetshire coast. Giltar Point terminates the prospect to the west.

Although the architectural remains of the district are numerous, and convey to the traveller some idea of their ancient extent, but little is left entire of the old Castle of Tenby; a single tower and some dilapidated walls being the only evidence of its former splendour. These ruins present a singular contrast to the neat, pretty walks and seats formed on the surrounding rock for the accommodation of visitors, from which the expansive sea is beheld to great advantage, studded with fishing boats and ships. Here strangers and residents hasten to watch the arrival and departure of steam boats and other vessels. The Church stands on an elevated part of the town, and is an antique structure, with modern additions and improvements. In the interior are some curious monuments. It has a lofty whitewashed steeple, which proves a useful landmark to the far-off mariner. From the hotel windows

when the weather is unpropitious, and the white-winged heralds of the storm hover in sight or utter their warning cry, the visitor can still console himself with contemplating the wide waste of waters, now full of 'noise and fury,' raising their angry crests, and exhibiting the varying *phases* of the mighty ocean.

Nearly south-west of the town rise those wild masses of rock forming the island of St. Catherine, and more distant those of St. Margaret and Caldy. In all weathers the effect upon the eye, with the Norton Sands, bounded by their majestic cliffs, is varied as it is picturesque; the sands on the south and west offer spacious and romantic walks close to the rocks, nearly as far as the grand promontory of Giltar. It is amusing to read that Mr. Fenton in company with Sir Richard Hoare, as a notable exploit, took boat from the pier of Tenby to visit Caldy, landing in a little bay just under the principal building, which is reached by a gentle ascent from the water.

Of the style of living at Tenby during the summer I can speak in just terms of eulogy; but as regards winter we are told that the people of the neighbourhood chiefly subsist upon codfish during the whole season. Even the fields are occasionally enriched with the same article to render them more productive. The women in men's hats and jackets assist in agricultural labour; and the country people understand the art of making good fires in their kitchens, which burn for the week together, with a fuel that makes scarcely any smoke.

Ever since my little trip from Holyhead, along the northern coast of Anglesea, to view its grand marine caverns—the work of a thousand storms—and the no-less-singular appear-

ance of the South Stack Lighthouse,* on its little rock below the mountain of *Caer Cybi*, where I spent some pleasant hours, I had not ceased to watch an occasion for the enjoyment of another cruise, and this the fine expanse of *Carmarthen* bay supplied to my heart's desire. Without loss of time I engaged a small yacht, and with a companion or two of my own mood, taking advantage of a gentle breeze one fine clear morning, we trimmed our sails and steered away for *Llanstephan Castle*. We first held our course as near as convenient to the land, which enabled me to observe the different features of the coast. The weather was truly delightful, not a cloud dimmed 'the blue serene,'—a delicious change to one long the denizen of smoky cities.

No wonder we are a nation of voyagers, fond of change and travel, and subduing all the elements with the necromancy of science to promote our objects. We are, indeed, the real conjurers who have dived deepest into the old black art of converting our baser products into gold, and rendering earth and ocean alike tributary to the potent spell of industry and enterprise. That this magic is the effect of sailing 'o'er the glad waters of the dark blue sea' no one will deny; and that it is very like conjuring, to say nothing of the glory of naval sovereignty and of the pleasure of bounding from shore to shore and from clime to clime, is, I think, equally undeniable. Behold the splendid launch—how she rushes into the boundless deep, leaving a track of foam like the outswell of some wintry heaving torrent! how soon we survey her gallantly equipped, and ready to 'walk the waters like a thing

* See *Roscoe's North Wales*, page 175.

of life,' and within how very short a period do we find ourselves on a foreign strand, gazing at objects wholly new to us.

‘ Oh, who can tell, save he whose heart hath tried,
And danced in triumph o’er the waters wide,
The exulting sense—the pulse’s maddening play,
That thrills the wanderer of that trackless way?’

Yet let no one condemn the homely joys of a little inland trip, with its variety of picturesque and sublime objects, and the rude health and feeling of joyous hilarity which, in spite of yourself, it will produce.

After making more than four hours sail we stood off opposite Ginst Point, between which and the coast near Llanishmael, those two noble rivers the Taff and the Towey roll their wedded streams into the broad blue bay. Directing our course next up the Towey we had the Taff on the left, and were presently borne by the sheer strength of the tide within sight of the once celebrated Castle of Llanstephan, finely situated on the brow of an elevated promontory. From its still bold dimensions, it must have been of commanding height, and breadth, and strength, and is supposed to have been erected in the year 1138. Standing upon its grass-grown and melancholy ruins, I beheld prospects spreading below me in all their pristine beauty and splendour, fresh and gay as in the early days of that crumbling and shapeless mass, beneath whose once-golden roof, high furbished halls, and flowery lattices, sat knights and ladies. Thence they gazed forth upon the same ever-varying, inconstant sea, the symbol of eternal change,—upon the same goodly and extensive prospects,—the blue ethereal expanse, the brilliant varied views of river, mountain, headland, and bay, that now I be-









held,—stretching away far as the Worm's Head; and on the other side, the arrowy bounding Towey, and portions of the district, with the same peculiar features, towards Carmarthen. The village of Llanstephen is not unpleasingly situated upon the same hill a little below the castle.

Intending upon my route towards Pembroke, to visit the fine old Castle of Manorbeer, and those interesting ruins of the Episcopal Palace of Lamphey, I took the nearest track to the sea. I could thus indulge my native predilection, imbibed in boyhood upon the shores of the Mersey and the Dee, for coast scenery, and the variety of prospects afforded by the ocean. Proceeding about four miles to the village of Lidstip, which gives the name of Lidstip Haven to an adjoining bay, protected from the western blasts by a range of high land, I obtained a splendid panoramic view, embracing Giltar Point, Caldy Island, and the Bristol Channel, enlivened by vessels of all kinds passing up and down. It fully repaid me for the route I had taken; and presented an opportunity of examining the different strata of the rocks in the immense stone quarries, which here give employment to the greater part of the neighbouring population. From hence a pleasant walk, still affording picturesque views, brought me in about two miles to the dreary and, I am sorry to add, dirty village of Manorbeer.

From the number of fragments, the '*disjecta membra*' of nobler edifices, strewn far around, the Manorbeer of other times would appear to have been much more extensive than at the present period. The antique Castle, or rather stronghold, is seen beetling high over the sea, its massy walls remaining yet almost entire. It is situated, as described by Leland, 'between two little hilletes,' and is an extensive

but irregular edifice, adapted for warlike times, and provided with apertures for the discharge of missile weapons instead of windows, the light being admitted only from the inner court. In the old feudal style, the chief entrance was by a noble gateway, protected by a semicircular court with a large barbican, and strongly flanked with bastions. Its ponderous towers, and the extent of its site, still to be traced amidst a scene so wild and desolate, present a strange contrast to its by-gone days of power and splendour, and throw a savage, sombre air over the vicinity. Its size and position are truly grand; from whatever spot it is viewed, the observer cannot fail to be struck with its stately magnitude and air of dignity. It may not be uninteresting here to repeat an observation of Dr. Samuel Johnson, narrated by the biographer of that celebrated lexicographer, who says, in reference to the formidable appearance of these edifices, ‘one of the castles in Wales would contain all he had seen in Scotland.’

Here in the twelfth century was born the great historian of the Principality, Giraldus Silvester, commonly known by his patronymic of *Cambrensis*,—the secretary, adviser, and travelling companion of Archbishop Baldwyn,—one of the most active and intelligent ecclesiastics of his times. He visited Jerusalem, took a survey of Ireland, and wrote descriptions of the different countries which he visited. He was descended, on the maternal side, from Rhys ab Tewdwr, one of the princes of Wales. At an early age, evincing a taste for reading, he was removed to the residence of his uncle, the Bishop of St. David’s, who superintended his education. He then travelled on the continent, where he remained three years, and on his return to England, in 1172, took orders, and was soon after presented with the archdeaconry of St.

David's. At the decease of his uncle, the chapter selected Giraldus as his successor in that see; but King Henry refused to ratify their choice, not thinking it prudent to raise a man of such talents and influence to the bench, who was allied with the princes of the country. After this repulse, Giraldus again went to France, and on his return was appointed one of the chaplains to the King, who committed to his care the education of his son John. During his residence in Ireland, he was offered two bishoprics, which, however, he refused; and in 1187 accompanied Archbishop Baldwyn to preach the crusade through Wales. Two years afterwards he attended King Henry to France, and, after his decease, was employed by Richard the First. He refused the bishoprics of Bangor and Landaff, having an eye on that of St. David's; but taking offence at repeated disappointments he resigned his preferments, retired from public notice, and spent the remainder of his life in literary pursuits.

Giraldus thus describes his native place:—‘The Castle of Maenorpyrr is distant about three miles from Penbroch. It is excellently well defended by turrets and bulwarks. On the right hand a rivulet of never-failing water flows through a valley, rendered sandy by the violence of the winds. * * * This country is well supplied with corn, sea-fish, and imported wines, and is tempered by a salubrious air. Demetia, therefore, with its seven cantreds, is the most beautiful, as well as the most powerful district of Wales; Penbroch, the finest province of Demetia; and the place I have just described, the most delightful part of Penbroch. It is evident therefore that Maenorpyrr is the pleasantest spot in Wales; and the author may be pardoned for having thus extolled his

native soil, his genial territory, with a profusion of praise and admiration.’*

Fronting the south side, across a small dingle, is seen the church, upon an elevated slope, with its single tower. Under a plain canopy in the chancel is a tomb supporting the effigy of a crusader, with the arms of a family who some time had possession of the Castle and its domains.

From the Castle there are varied and extensive prospects, comprising the elegant domain of Stackpole, the grand promontory beyond, called St. Govan’s Head, and the Bristol Channel. The mighty ocean rolls its resistless surges along Manorbeer Bay towards the main, and, breaking impetuously against the rocks below, mingles its sublime and eternal music with the wild seamew’s cries, appealing to the eye and the imagination with more than ordinary power.

From this singularly wild and picturesque portion of the coast, I took my way through the villages of Jamestown and Hodgston to the interesting ruins of Lamphey, hardly more than three miles from Pembroke. The remains of this once-magnificent Palace are situated in meadows, and some parts, not yet dilapidated, have been appropriated to ornament the approach to a more recently erected mansion, close to the ancient edifice. It is mentioned that to Bishop Gower may be ascribed its grandeur and extent, as that part with the arched parapet (found also in his other buildings—the Palace of St. David’s and Castle of Swansea), particularly characterizes his style.

Once an episcopal palace belonging to the see of St. David, and subsequently a seat of the unfortunate Earl of Essex,

* *Howe’s Gleanings*, vol. 1.









these magnificent ruins appear in bolder relief from their association with more stirring times. Had it been erected on an elevated site, the building would have appeared more majestic. The eastern window is extremely elegant; and luxuriant ivy now adds to the picturesque appearance of the crumbling fabric. A gloomy and melancholy silence pervades the whole scene; and ere long little will remain to show the outline of this extensive and costly pile.

CHAPTER XI.

PEMBROKE—STACKPOLE COURT—ST. GOVAN'S—CAREW CASTLE, &c.

—————' HERE could I muse
The livelong day, and wandering down the dell,
Along the grassy margin trace the stream
Meandering; now confined from crag to crag,
Where bursts the headlong flood, or widely spread
'Mid the broad channel, where the undimpled wave
Bathing the wild flowers bending o'er the brink
Glides silent by.'

WITH English impressions newly awakened, I entered the quiet, genteel-looking town of Pembroke, the capital of the county, too well appreciated by all classes of tourists to call for additional eulogy, or new description at my hands. For the attractions of its Castle alone it is deserving of all commendation; and from the many pleasant excursions it holds out, it is becoming a still greater favourite and centre of attraction with summer ramblers from various parts. What in fine weather can surpass a visit to Stackpole Court, the seat of Earl Cawdor—to the bluff promontory of St. Govan's Head—to Bosherton Meer, and, along the iron-bound coast, to those singular rocks called the Stacks—to Carew Castle—to the Government Dock-yard at Pater—or a cruise through Pen-

nar Mouth to Milford, or up the stream to Laurenny or Haverfordwest? And all these places are well worthy the attention of visitors.

Pembroke is advantageously situated on a branch of Milford Haven, which carries small vessels at high water up to the quay. Next to Carmarthen it is the most spacious and wealthy town in the western district of South Wales, but has not increased latterly in wealth or population, in consequence of numerous removals to the new Government settlement at Pater. It possesses a free school, several excellent inns, and a court house. It has given the title of Earl to several families, and lastly to that of the Herberts in whom it still remains.

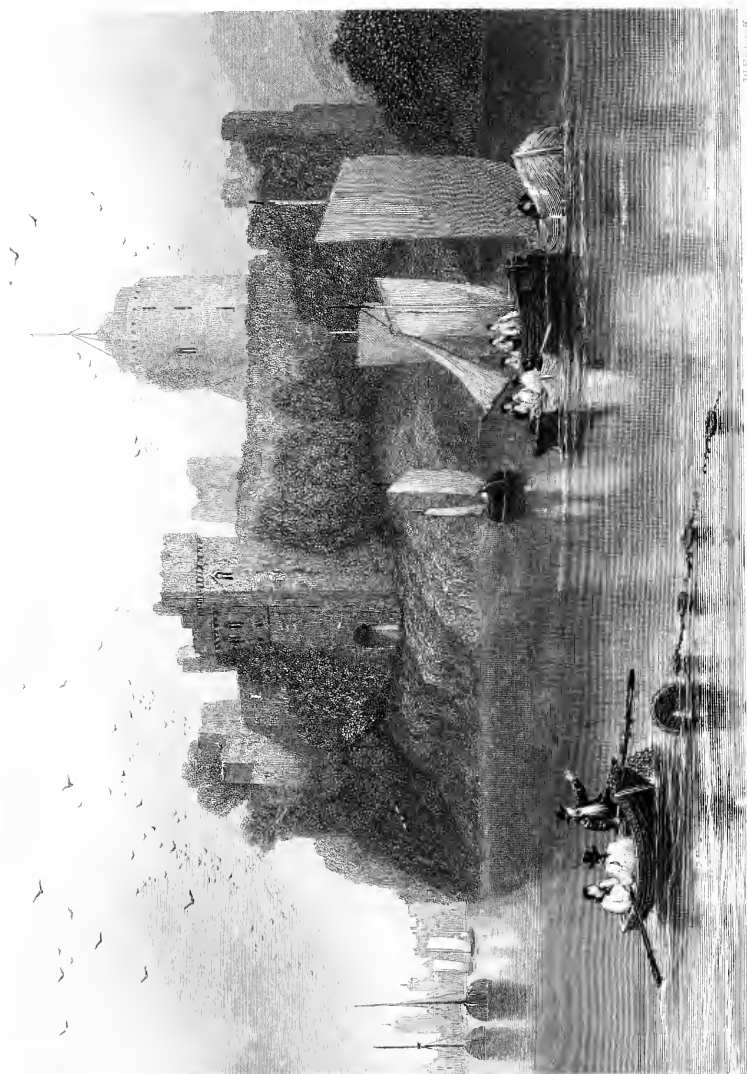
To the north, Pembroke is encompassed by a thick wall, flanked by numerous bastions, but on the south its remains are scarcely visible. It formerly possessed three handsome gates, 'by est, west, and north,' as old Leland quaintly describes it, 'of the wich the est gate is fairest and strongest, having a faire but compasid tour not rofed, in the entering whereof is a portcolys *ex solido ferro*.' The north gate still presents a tolerably entire appearance.

Upon a bold rocky eminence stand the castellated ruins,—the most extensive and magnificent perhaps, as well as varied, of which the Principality can boast. Its grand imposing outline, with numerous sides, bastions, and projections of different sizes, acquires bolder relief from the lofty picturesque site, and the air of grandeur derived from its combination of old Norman architecture with the Gothic. The tower which overlooks the water, the entrance from the town, and the round tower, are all that remain in tolerable preservation. It was divided into an inner and outer ward, in the former

of which was the keep with the state apartments, in the latter, the different offices for the use of the garrison; there were also spacious rooms over the entrance leading from the town, in one of which King Henry the Seventh was born. It is seen, perhaps, to greatest advantage when approaching the place by water from Pennar Mouth.

Pembroke Castle was distinguished, at the period of the civil wars, by the gallant defence it made in favour of Charles, under the command of General Laugharne and Colonel Poyer. Parliament being informed of the increase of their resources, came to the resolution, in 1648, of sending Cromwell with a large force to reduce it—who in a letter to the House, says, ‘the reduction is more difficult then expected; the castle of Pembroke being equal to any in England, and well provided of all things.’ After a long siege, Cromwell succeeded in obtaining possession by cutting off the supply of water. The garrison surrendered on the following articles:—‘That Laugharne, Poyer, and three other officers do surrender unto the mercy of the Parliament. That several others do depart the kingdom not to return within two years. The town to be free from plunder. Army, ammunition, &c. to be delivered up to Cromwell. The Prince being informed of some rigorous measures intended against Powell, Poyer, and Laugharne, wrote to Fairfax to interpose, so that he might not be obliged to retaliate on such as might fall into his power. Fairfax in answer said, he had applied to the House but it was not in his power to act further, Parliament having ordered how they were to be proceeded against. In April, 1649, a council of war passed sentence of death against Powell and Laugharne as they had before done against Poyer, and Cromwell sent an order for them to draw lots to determine which of them







should die. On two of which lots was written, ‘Life given by God;’ the third was a blank. The prisoners not willing to be the instruments of their own destiny, a child drew the lots, and the blank one falling on Poyer, he was shot in Covent Garden.’

Amongst the interesting places in this district, none is so well calculated to attract the wanderer’s attention, and excite his patriotic feelings, as the Government Dockyard for building or repairing ships, on the margin of the Haven, two miles from Pembroke. I could not help observing the admirable arrangements of this establishment; and must not withhold my approbation of the orderly and efficient manner in which these extensive public works are conducted. This place is, as it were, one of the nurseries by which we maintain our national glory and importance. Here all is activity and bustle. On one side lay numerous blocks of oak of huge dimensions, intended to form our largest ships—on another, anchors of immense size, which probably might be destined to become the hopes of thousands of mariners in the hour of peril: on one hand an elegant ship ready to leave the stocks—on the other, the imperfect skeleton of one in progress. The whole establishment occupies a space of sixty-five acres, enclosed by a lofty wall; and contains the residence of the Commissioner, besides houses for several officers, and also a church.

The village, called Pater, that had been springing up close to this noble work, has of late so far increased as to bid fair, at no great distance of time, to become a more important place than its parent town. It possesses many advantages as a place of trade,—particularly that of deep water at most periods of the tide. The mail from London now runs to

Hobb's Point, instead of Milford; and the Post Office packet for Waterford is brought up the Haven as far as the new village, in order to take in the bags. Here too is a splendid hotel, and a fine pier, both of recent construction, built by Government.

While one delights in the freshness and vigour of a *new town* emerging from the waste, and rearing its audacious head in rivalry, and it may be, almost in hostility, of its birth-place, one cannot suppress a degree of regret at the contumelious appellation of the *old town* which first follows in this advance of events, and then at the apathy and decay which, whether imaginary or real, seems to rest upon it, especially when brought into contrast with the youth and vivacity of its offspring.

In my many wanderings through various lands, I have always found it advantageous to my purpose and amusement to fix my head quarters in some central place, or some district metropolis, and to diverge from thence in excursions, whether long or short, as might best suit my convenience. I have thus contrived to keep up the idea—and who does not love to cherish the idea?—of home. *My* home being now the crowded city, or the secluded hamlet—now the busy strand, or, not unfrequently, the solitary vessel in the wide ocean. According to this my practice then, I called the Hotel, in the long street of ‘ancient Pembroch,’ my home during my brief sojourn in this district.

It was on one of those fine, rich Autumn days which, in the rural and well-wooded districts of Great Britain, make this the most delightful season of the year for a day's ramble, that I set off on an excursion to St. Govan's Head, and along the rocky coast which gives so bold and picturesque a

character to the vicinity. Upon ascending the eminence outside of the town, I was delighted with the prospect opening around me, comprising Pembroke stretched at my feet, part of the unruffled waters of Milford Haven, and a bold sweeping expanse bounded only by the horizon. I passed forward by St. Daniel's Church, a singular and picturesque old edifice, with its steeple partly covered with ivy, and proceeding farther to the still higher ground of Windmill Hill, I beheld a view on all sides yet more beautiful and extensive, with the town of Milford fairly made out, and a portion of Pater, relieved by the range of dusky hills on the other side the Haven.

Having lingered for some time over this enchanting prospect, I pursued my way from this point through the wretched looking village of Kingsfold, where the dirty hovels of the labourers form a painful contrast to the clean and neatly-thatched cottages of neighbouring England, and passed through a tolerably well-cultivated district to St. Petrox. The church, enveloped in a verdant shade of spreading trees, and the noble Park of Stackpole Court, form the most interesting objects of attention. It is the air of quietness and repose resting upon it, which gives to a village churchyard its soothing and attractive character. The house of prayer for the living, rising amidst the memorials of the dead scattered all around, naturally originates a train of serious thought and reflection, casting over the mind a purifying influence. To a wanderer like myself, this last peaceful resting-place is always an object of peculiar and affecting interest, and I cast a lingering look upon the grey tower of this little sanctuary, as I bent my steps towards Stackpole Court. I was gratified by the permission of the noble owner to pass through the spacious park belong-

ing to this domain, by which I saved a distance of between two and three miles, and had the pleasure derived from contemplating the 'old hereditary trees,' with all those sylvan delights and solitudes, made vocal by the warbling of a thousand birds, the secret whispering of the leaves, slightly stirred by the soft breeze, and the deep shadows and recurring gleams of the wood's recesses, celebrated with so much enthusiasm by the poet Cowley.

The carriage road which passes through the park gates commences at St. Petrox, and within a hundred yards from thence the broad expanse of the ocean almost suddenly breaks upon the view, here and there studded with white sails. From the same eminence a prospect is commanded over a considerable portion of the park. Every object around seemed invested with the calm, solemn peace of the dark majestic woods; not a cloud shadowed 'the deep serene.' The sun shone clear in mid heaven; the music of myriads of insects arose above the whispers of the gentle wind amongst the leaves; the rooks hovered in wild concentric circles above my head, and the cattle in groups were seeking the coolness of the shade and stream. Nothing could surpass the variegated beauty of the foliage, and the rich contrast of colours between these ancient foresters, sacred from the woodman's touch, with their stems and branches partially exposed by the winds of Autumn; the silver-barked birch, that 'lady of the woods,' gracefully dipping her bending branches in the clear waters, the shining ash, the smooth beech, the rough elm, the knotted moss-grown oak, blending together their rich dying hues of the year's decline, threw an ineffable charm over the whole landscape. On my right, and a little farther onwards, was an almost perfect solitude of trees—

still in full leaf—whose branches meeting above quite shut out the sun's rays, except through casual openings. To the left again was a deep dell, entirely covered with the hazel, the aspen, the mountain ash, and other trees, while the wild rose, the stretching blackberry, and that green parasite, the ivy, filled up the vacant spaces under the overhanging boughs; so thick, indeed, were their intermingled leaves and branches, that a glimpse could scarcely be caught of the romantic stream which threads its way along the centre of this dell till it reaches the sea, though its murmuring and rippling were continually breaking upon the ear. Here and there I perceived, scattered through the park, several extensive sheets of water, the margins covered with underwood and rushes.

The wanderer's track is not always, like the traveller's road, straight, measured, and Macadamized, but, in lieu for this, it is what pleases him a thousand times more,—unconstrained and free, stretching onwards wherever his purpose, or the ever-varying mood of his mind, may lead. When I had bid adieu to the magnificence and beauty of Stackpole Court, I struck off across the fields, and pursued my solitary way to Bosherton. The fragrance of the furze, which here grows luxuriantly, and was still richly in flower, quite perfumed the air; and fresh pictures of natural beauty and variety continually opened upon the eye as I passed on over the heathy moor. At length I reached the bluff promontory of St. Govan,* projecting his rocky head high above the sea; the scenery all around being precipitous, rocky, and wild. At no great distance stands an ancient chapel almost entire, and

* The great display of scenery is at Sir Gawaine's Chapel and Head. This valiant knight has been transformed by popular error into a saint.—*Malkin*.

near it a little spring of clear bubbling water, encircled with brick-work. The prospect from this place is one of the most extensive and sublime I have ever beheld. The fissure in the rocks, in which the little chapel (erected almost midway in the descent) is built, appears to have been produced by a violent convulsion of nature. Seated on the dry mossy turf above the terrific chasm, I indulged in contemplating the surrounding wildness, and the changing lights which danced upon the ocean. Out of the beaten road of tourists, at the extreme end, indeed, of the county, the tract of St. Govan, extreme in its loneliness, and almost unvisited by man, produced feelings and sensations in unison with the extraordinary characteristics of the scene. The building is said to have been a hermitage, but it has more the appearance of a rude chapel than any thing else. It offers, however, a fit retreat for an anchorite, had not the eternal law of change, in its whimsical caprices, made the friendless dweller in crowded cities the most solitary being on earth.

From the inner cove of the bay, on the sides of which the chapel stands, the vision, at first bounded by rocks of a thousand irregular forms, is then carried, in distant perspective, over the wide expanse of the boundless sea; but in directing the eye along this iron-bound coast, vast caverns are discovered in the rocks, formed by the incessant action of the waves. In some instances, indeed, perforations have been made in the jutting rocks, through which, when the spirit of the western storm is raised, the ocean pours its rolling waters, and the wild winds howl and shriek in appalling frenzy.

The day was gloriously fine; the clear blue waters shone bright and smooth as a magnificent mirror far below me,—the sun's rays painted the multiform aspect of the rocks in a

thousand variegated hues rich as the rainbow's tints. The seamews wheeled in airy circles,—now dipping in their rapid flight their grey wings in the spray,—now breasting the wave as though the water was their only element. At every step, as I pursued my way along the bleak and craggy heights, myriads of these creatures were disturbed from their dizzy resting places on the ledges of the rocks, and with wild and plaintive cries swept along my solitary path. In a short time I came to that fearful fissure in the cliffs, called the Huntsman's Leap, of which tradition relates, that two huntsmen, coming upon it in full career, plunged over at a single bound.

A little beyond this is a singular place called Bosherton Meer, formed by the perpetual force of the waves. It presents on the surface of the ground only a small aperture, which, like a winding funnel, gradually widens below until it spreads into an extensive vault. In stormy weather, when the sea beats with violence against the rocks, the noise emitted from this aperture is awful, and occasionally immense columns of spray are forced through it to an immense height. Small bays and creeks indented this undulating line of coast; and chasms, and craggy rocks, inhabited by cormorants, razor-bills, and gulls, continually intersected my progress until I reached the land opposite the two lofty insular rocks, called the Stacks. The harsh and discordant notes of that singular bird the *eligug*, a species of auk, soon announced that I had intruded upon their favourite haunts, and disturbed 'their ancient solitary reign.' From time immemorial, this peculiar tribe has been the tenant of these lonely rocks. Its members are wayfarers from a distant land. They hold no communion with other tribes of the feathered race, and

seldom settle upon any other part of the coast. Sailing over these stormy towers they look upon that narrow neck of land where once stood the camp of the Scandinavian pirate, from whose little bay, apparently scooped out of the rock, he was accustomed to push off his adventurous bark on perilous enterprises. Rising in clouds above my head, they almost darkened the air, uttering their loud complaints at my intrusion; so discordant, indeed, were their screams that I was glad to pursue my way, taking the path through Warren, Stem Bridge, and passing by the estate of Orielson, the seat of Sir John Owen. I was much delighted by the contrast which this fine, fertile country presents to the bleak, savage character of the coast scenes I had just left, and by the varied images of beauty and repose which were now spread around me.

Having recovered from the fatigue of my former ramble, I took the advantage of a calm, serene day to make my intended excursion to Carew Castle. Magnificent in its ruins, the vast dimensions of this lordly monument of heroic days cover part of a slight elevation of land on the most easterly arm of the Haven of Milford. The noble apartments which surrounded a quadrangle, with an immense bastion at each corner, the grand gateway leading into a spacious court, and some magnificent windows, are still to be seen as the remains of this splendid structure.

The Castle is situated at a short distance from the village of Carew; and the appearance of its vast roofless walls, still presenting a bulwark to the shocks of time, is at once solemn and sublime. Two immense trees, having their trunks within the walls, send forth huge feelers, which seem to climb with redoubled strength amid the spreading dilapidations of ages,







—crowning the topmost points—disguising the yawning gaps of time, and throwing freshness and beauty around decay. The north view of this edifice, which the pencil and the graver have so graphically represented, conveys, perhaps, the best idea of its original grandeur and extent; the walls on the south having been destroyed by that great leveller of strongholds, Oliver Cromwell.

A few of the apartments are yet in a great measure entire; among these is the great banquetting hall, of regal capaciousness, in earlier days the seat of feudal pomp and magnificent hospitality. Three ancient coats of arms still decorate the entrance. This and the splendid state room, of still greater dimensions, (in which there are yet remains of elegant marble cornices, and fire-places with Corinthian columns, rich in device and exquisite in workmanship,) are now tenanted by birds of prey. Silence reigns in these halls; not that of repose, but of utter desolation and irremediable ruin. A silence deep and unbroken, save when

‘From her ivy-mantled tower
The moping owl doth to the moon complain.’

Formerly the residence of a Welsh Prince, and a long line of regal and lordly lineage, Carew Castle, in its high and palmy days, transcended most of its feudal contemporaries; its courts and halls have been thronged with gallant knights and their retainers, and made vocal with the minstrelsy of that heroic age; its tapestried rooms have entertained the fairest dames of Cambria, in those days of love and chivalry, and have echoed to the *chanson amoureux* of the wayward troubadour; and many a pilgrim has held his audience in breathless wonder, as he told the marvellous tales of his weary wanderings in foreign lands. High and festal days

has Carew Castle seen, when royal visitors, in long succession, were entertained within its walls. Various, indeed, has been the fate of this stronghold of feudal power. Carew Castle has borne the stern brunt of ruthless war—it has suffered many a protracted siege—it has heard the lament of many a solitary prisoner in its *donjon*, and witnessed many a secret or open deed of blood. But gallant knights, and fair dames, and merry minstrels, and mysterious pilgrims, have all vanished, like the visions in Banquo's glass, and lone and grass-grown courts, and crumbling walls, and scattered fragments, with the scroll of the veritable chronicler, alone remain to tell that such things were.

This structure appears to be of different ages. According to Leland it was remodelled and enlarged by Sir Rhys ap Thomas. On the south side it opened upon a handsome and extensive deer park. In part of this ground the same knight is said to have held a special tournament, with other warlike games and pastimes, in honour of St. George, (the common patron, it should seem, of our warlike barons,) for the entertainment of Henry VII., when on his route to Bosworth Field.

Near the entrance to the lawn, in front of the castle, just on the road side leading to Carew Church and village, stands one of the early crosses, in the centre of which is an elaborate inscription that cannot now be deciphered.

CHAPTER XIII.

MILFORD HAVEN—MILFORD—HAVERFORDWEST—FISHGUARD—CARDIGAN.

————— WAVE after wave,
If such they might be called, dashed as in sport,
Not anger, with the pebbles on the beach
Making wild music, and far westward caught
The sun-beam; where, alone and as entranced,
Counting the hours, the fisher in his skiff
Lay with his circular and dotted line
On the bright waters.

Rogers.

THE next morning after returning from Carew to Pembroke, I hired a boat from the latter place, intending, in company with a friend, to cruise about the Haven during the day, and to take up my quarters at Milford in the evening. Upon clearing a little way off Pembroke, the waters of what may be called the southern arm of Milford Haven become enlarged, stretching in parts a mile across, and having the appearance of an extensive lake encircled by rising ground—the outlet of this great body of water, at the straits called Pennar Mouth, not being more than two hundred yards broad. Here the tide of course runs with great rapidity either up or down; and boats cannot readily work against the power of the stream.

Leaving behind us the Pennar heights, and entering a wider expanse of water, I could not help exclaiming—‘Am I then sailing on the far-famed Milford Haven! on the spot that I have associated with all that is noble and beautiful—with Nelson and the Victory!’ I know not why, but I felt disappointed; probably I had pictured a scene too beautiful and splendid for reality. But I am fearful I viewed it rather with an eye to the picturesque, than with that of a patriot, or I could not have avoided being struck with its advantages to the nation, and the ready asylum it offers to the distressed sailor, sheltered as it is on every side from the loud blast and angry storm.

Although there is a dreary bleakness about the hills surrounding the Haven, yet in fine weather a sail upon it is very delightful; and in some parts the banks at the extremity are pleasingly diversified, particularly towards Lawrenny, where the scenery is richly wooded. This noble sheet of water is about twelve miles long, varying from two to three in breadth, and is sufficiently capacious to hold at anchor all the navy of Great Britain.

The town of Milford is agreeably situated on a point of high land with a gentle slope towards the water, from which it has a very imposing effect. Some twenty or thirty years ago it bid fair to become one of our principal marts of commerce—it grew important and full of business, and of wealth too; but the turn of the tide could not be more rapid than its decline from its former prosperity.*

* It is curious to read the works of tourists who published remarks on this neighbourhood twenty or thirty years ago. *Malkin*, who wrote the second edition of his *Excursions* in 1807, says,—‘The new town (Milford) is making rapid progress; and the style of building in general is far superior to what this part of the country has hitherto been accustomed to adopt. Whether the commercial visions, which





There appears to be a stagnation of every thing like trade, which is chiefly attributable to the removal of the Government Dock-yard, together with many hundred men, higher up the Haven. Along with it, the old commercial trade seems also to have taken its departure for ever; for, inquiringly as I looked about me, I could not catch the sight of a single trader belonging to the place. As if to deal another blow,—and that ‘the unkindest cut of all’—the Post Master General has recently ordered the Steam Packet for Waterford to be brought up the stream as far as Pater; so that the Mail coach now drives to Hobb’s Point instead of Milford, saving thereby a distance of about five miles.

Scores of houses are now shut up; Dulness sits undisputed sovereign of the port, and her poor subjects, under the influence of her leaden sceptre, wander sadly about, or congregate in little groups, with the tacit understanding to be ‘unhappy together.’ The miserable inhabitants, as they promenade from the Flag Staff to the Church and back again, seem like ‘walking spirits of by-gone days,’ looking for the tenth time this half-hour to see whether the wind has shifted a point; wondering for the twentieth time that day whether it will rain during the night; and sighing between times that Government should have used them so harshly.

‘A visiter’ has a strange sound to the Milford people; he is looked upon as a foreigner, whose now-and-then ap-

magnify the future Milford into a rivalship with our first trading towns, are likely to be realised, I do not pretend to conjecture.’ And *Fenton*, who published his elaborate tour through Pembrokeshire in 1810, remarks—‘The creation of the new town of Milford is an important epoch in the history of this county. These various establishments (the hotel, the church, the dockyard, the custom house, &c.) now in being, like all things in an infant state, kept alive by prudent fostering, are liable to sudden revolutions; and may, perhaps, not exist when another tourist shall go over the same ground.’

pearance serves to keep alive public curiosity; this is particularly the case with the innkeeper, who holds the hotel, I understood, without paying any rent, solely to keep it from falling into decay. Poor man! Nothing can exceed the disconsolate air of his establishment; and his only gratifying reflection is a retrospect of former times, and the mournful consolation that 'it was not always so.'

The only stirring event that marked my visit to Milford, was the destruction of a large foreign ship by fire, which had put in a short time previously for some repairs; and it was certainly a glorious sight, however much to be deplored. She burst into flames at midnight, and was consumed to the water's edge. I was aroused in the dead of night, when all around was wrapt in darkness; the sudden terrific contrast was, indeed, grand and appalling. To behold the sea illumined with the blaze—the rolling waves resembling masses of moving fire, red as a lake of blood—the crashing of the masts as they fell one by one—with the eagerness of the whole place to lend assistance, or their gathering in groups to gaze upon the magnificent spectacle, was awfully picturesque, and as interesting as it was terrible.

From Milford I forthwith bent my course towards Haverfordwest, Fishguard, and Cardigan. On reaching the summit of the hill near Stainton, the retrospect is exceedingly agreeable, comprising the noble harbour of Milford and the opposite promontory of Angle. Nor were my English associations less pleasingly awakened as I passed the village of Johnson, and over Pope Hill, whence, proceeding across Maudlin's Bridge, I soon found myself within the town of Haverfordwest. On the way, I was gratified by observing that the land appeared well cultivated, and that there was

an appearance of cheerfulness and content among the labouring population, rather unusual, of late days, in the Principality as elsewhere.

Haverfordwest, one of the largest and most prosperous towns in Pembrokeshire, is favorably situated for trade on the river Cleddy, which communicates with the sea at Milford Haven. In itself it is uninteresting, whether as it regards its miserably narrow zig-zag streets, or the dull inanimate appearance of its inhabitants; it has, however, a respectable air at a distance, and perhaps the best view of it is from the road leading to Fishguard. The remains of the old castle, built in the reign of Stephen, have been converted into the county gaol.

From this point, if desirous of a pleasant walk of about four miles, the tourist may find himself seated in the park belonging to Picton Castle; and on casting his eye over the beautiful intermixture of umbrageous verdure, green and level lawns, and fertile fields, which compose the surrounding scenery, he will not regret the labour. The Castle has many associations which render it an object of great interest. It is connected with the lawless times of William II., when the arbitrary will of the sovereign constituted the authority, and military power and violence the means, of forcible and unjust possession. Its mixed architecture bears the traces of its transition from the almost impregnable strength of a ruthless age, to the elegant and convenient domestic arrangements of more secure and peaceful days. It is built in the centre of the domain, and commands a view of the confluence of two fine streams, which roll their clear bright waters into the Haven.

I left the Park by the richly wooded path leading to

Slebech, where once stood a Commandery, belonging to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, and having regained the high road, arrived in the afternoon at the village of Robeston Wathen; in the neat inn of which place, as the rain was falling in torrents, I determined on taking up my quarters during the night. For a road side *hostelrie* I found it more comfortable than I had expected, and the people were very civil and obliging. But it had other and more intellectual claims upon my notice; for in travelling, whether far or near, I quite agree with one of the most delightful writers of our age,* that ‘we multiply events, and that innocently. We set out, as it were, on our adventures; and many are those that occur to us, morning, noon, and night. The day we come to a place which we have long heard and read of, is an era in our lives; and from that moment the very name calls up a picture.’ And so it was with me. I met in that little parlour an agreeable and intellectual companion—one whose profession was connected with all that is refined and liberal. He was a painter. He had followed the same wild coast-path as myself. He had seen the winged watchers on the Stacks, and stood on the bold jutting promontory of St. Govan, looking out upon that broad ocean, whose ever-rolling waves fitly suggest the idea of eternity. He had, like me, struck off from the stormy scenes of savage nature, with her stern rocks and foaming billows, to luxuriate in her peaceful smiles, as she hushed and cradled the winds in the rich glens and valleys of this picturesque county. We compared our pictures, not our graphic or caligraphic ones, but those original paintings traced on the clear

* Samuel Rogers.

fluid of the vision, and then transferred in all their richness to the memory, as their receding lines vanished before the advancing forms of another and yet another, still more sublime and lovely than the first. It was but an instantaneous mental act to summon from their secret storehouse picture after picture, and to expatiate again and again upon their surpassing beauties and sublimities; revelling in this interchange of thought and fancy, with emotions as fresh and rich as those with which they were first seen. This was an evening in my changeful life that I shall long remember.

Early the following morning I parted from my pleasant friend, never, perhaps, to see him again, and bent my way across the country to Fishguard. On gaining an eminence at a short distance, I rested to watch the sun breaking in all his splendour over the woody ridge of old Llanhaudain; his first rays resting on the hoary ruins of its Castle. Bright and glowing were his beams as they played, almost in mockery, upon this ancient heritage of the mitred Lords of St. David. The ivy had wreathed itself in uncontrolled luxuriance round the solitary tower that remains of this once-massy pile, flaunting with the air of undisputed possession, and covering by its thick and spreading leaves the destructive progress of ages;

‘ All green and wildly fresh without,

But grey and worn beneath.’

Below it lay the fine valley of Tal y Bont, through which the river Cleddau, rapid, deep, and clear, pursues its onward course to meet the majestic tide of Milford. Nothing could exceed the lovely composition of this scene,—the wood-crowned steep, clothed in the rich and varied hues of Autumn, —the narrow green vale with its little church,—the bridge stretching its architectural proportions across the playful

waters, all harmonized and mellowed by situation and distance, and animated with the exhilarating influences of the fresh morning breeze. Passing next through Clarboston and Spittal, I came to the high road towards Fishguard, near Leweston mountain; but the remainder of the route was tame and uninteresting. It was quite a contrast to the valley scene of Tal y Bont. Scarcely a wood, a hill, or a river presented itself to relieve the dull monotony; and in one part I went miles together almost without passing a single habitation.

The town of Fishguard is chiefly built upon a steep rock on the northern part of Pembrokeshire, which is washed by the waters of St. George's Channel. It possesses an extensive harbour or bay, protected from the westerly blasts by high lands lying between it and Penbrush Point. Having considerable depth of water, it might readily, under the direction of an experienced engineer, be formed into a refuge for vessels passing up or down the Channel, in the frequent storms peculiar to this coast.

Although the town wears a pleasing and rather interesting aspect from the beach, yet it possesses few well-built houses; which, perhaps, explains the reason why Fishguard is not resorted to for sea bathing. From the number of people I met of very advanced age, I should judge the air to be very salubrious; and in this respect I believe it resembles most places situated on an eminence above the sea. Notwithstanding the want of fashionable recommendation, there is a constant succession of objects calculated to interest the visiter, especially in the vessels passing along the Channel, and the number of fishing boats and other small craft entering and leaving the bay.

Taking advantage of a fine afternoon I set out upon a walk of some four miles, through the village of Llanwnda to the Goodwich Beach, where, at a place called Aber-y-felin, about fourteen hundred Frenchmen made a hostile landing in 1797. Mr. Fenton, the historian of Pembrokeshire, gives the following account of this singular irruption:—

‘Goodwick Beach, which, for many ages after the sanguinary battle between the armies of Prince Trahaearn ap Caradoc and that of Rhys ap Owen, who usurped the sovereignty of South Wales, had been conscious of nothing but the lashing of the Irish sea, has been rendered memorable by a more recent event—the surrender of the French troops under Tate; and, as the accounts which have been given of it to the public are as various as the passions of the different narrators, a plain recapitulation of the most material facts might not be unacceptable, or without its use, by one on the spot, whose retired habits precluded him from a share in the council or the field, and who therefore had more leisure calmly to attend to all that was passing, so as to make a fair estimate of the extent of the alarm, and its effects on the minds of the people.

‘On Tuesday, the 20th of February, 1797, the finest day ever remembered at such a season, when all nature, earth, and ocean wore an air of unusual serenity, three large vessels were discovered standing in from the Channel, and nearing the rocky coast of Llanwnda, which the inhabitants at first imagined to be Liverpool merchantmen becalmed, and coming to an anchor to wait the return of the tide or a brisker gale; but on their approaching much nearer than it was usual, or might be deemed safe for vessels of their size, most serious alarm was excited; an alarm that was considerably increased

when boats were seen putting off full of men, in such rapid succession, as to leave no doubt of their being an enemy, which, late in the evening, was confirmed by their actually having begun to disembark, a service that was not completed till midnight; by which time their casks of ammunition, heavy as they were, were rolled up an almost precipitous steep, grown glassy by the dryness of the weather. This was a task apparently so Herculean, as almost to exceed credibility; and what I question much, all circumstances considered, if greater powers, in a better cause, would not have hesitated to attempt.

‘The night being remarkably dark, it was impossible to ascertain their numbers; fear magnifying their hundreds into thousands. The inhabitants more immediately within the reach of the ferocious invaders for the most part deserted their houses, and took refuge in the rocks and thick furze. The town of Fishguard, and its vicinity, though a little farther off, yet caught the general panic; and after many useless conferences and discussions, were able to effect nothing more than the removal of their wives, children, and most valuable articles for greater security into the interior.

‘In the mean time, the bloodhounds were no sooner at leisure than they hastened to satiate their hunger, which, from the vast toil they had undergone, and their scanty allowance of provisions for some days, was become voracious. The fields were selected for the purpose of cookery, and the operations were carried on upon an immense scale. Not a fowl was left alive, and the geese were literally boild in butter. They then proceeded to plunder, and to every brutal excess that pampered and inflamed appetites could prompt them to; but the veil of night was kindly drawn over their execrable

orgies, disgraceful to nature, and which humanity shudders to imagine.

‘Gluttony was followed by intoxication; and here the finger of heaven was manifestly visible; for, in consequence of a wreck of wine a few days before on that coast, there was not a cottage but supplied a cask of it; the intemperate use of which produced a frenzy that raised the men above the controul of discipline, and sunk many of their officers below the power of command; and to this principally, in gratitude to the Divine Being, may be ascribed the so speedy and happy termination of a business that seemed to menace a much more distressing catastrophe. For certain it is, had they availed themselves of the first moments of alarm, debate, and indecision, the ravage, without much hazard to themselves, they might have committed is incalculable.

‘But sensual indulgence, into which they instantly plunged, had enervated and rendered them unfit for service; the spirit of obedience was extinguished; and every attempt to rekindle it and restore order, only served to increase that licentiousness which actual correction ripened into mutiny; a symptom no sooner discovered by the French General, than he, like a discreet pilot who, when he finds the vessel will not answer the helm, takes the first opportunity, without consulting the dissatisfied crew, to run her ashore, late on Wednesday evening proposed a surrender, which was accepted by us as absolute and unconditional; and by the French soldiery, beginning to awake from their delirium, and capable of reflecting on the flattering advantages they had lost, acceded to with a sort of sulky submission.

‘However, our troops, actuated by true British valour, from the gallant Peer who headed them to the meanest of his fol-

lowers, had taken a judicious position, and waited with firmness the motions of the enemy; yet this was a moment rich beyond the power of language to paint, as it recalled the fugitives to their homes, the husbandman to his plough, the shepherd to his flock, restored the suspended animation of the fields, and gave us a harvest of laurels, without hazarding the precious blood of our brave defenders.'

Wanderer as I am along the highways and by-ways of many lands, and though my track is often as wayward as my mood may be, albeit there is still some method in my wanderings, which the gentle reader will not fail to discover, if he be but careful to follow assiduously upon my steps. In this way it was that I took the path coastwise in the direction of Newport, placing before me, as the ultimate object of my present excursion, Cardigan, and the interesting scenes upon the lower part of that fine river, the Teivy,—gathering up, by the way, the rich associations of by-gone days, which almost cluster upon these green spots of early romance.

Has the gentle reader ever found himself alone on some unfrequented path, amidst the everlasting hills and bold gigantic forms of primeval nature, shaped and fashioned, it may be, in some sense, by the slow wear of almost unnumbered ages, —surrounded, at the same instant, by the memorials of time, decaying and ruined in its lapses, though exhibiting in their massy remains a purpose of perpetuity, as if to emulate her enduring power?—and has he, also, in connection with such scenes, unfettered his imagination, and directed it to accompany the march of events that have been traced by the pen of some faithful chronicler, with which he has enriched his memory? Then has the gentle reader known something of the strange, fitful, melancholy, and richly sensitive emotions of the Wanderer, as he trod the path he is now describing.

On my right rose the huge mountain range of the Perselly, with the Vrenny Vawr, stretching to the east, as its extreme out-post, looking inland, and far over the neighbouring counties of Caermarthen and Cardigan; while Carn Englyn, like a giant, on its western point, frowns from his rocky summit upon the open sea, having within his range the bold promontory of Dinas Head, and the fine bays of Newport and Fishguard, with the rich valleys of Nevern and the Gwayn. Between these distant mountains, in a receding line, and towering to a still greater height, stands another stupendous ridge, like a broad battalion, connecting its van and rear guard; over which human industry has constructed a road, that opens a direct communication from Cardigan to the Port of Milford.

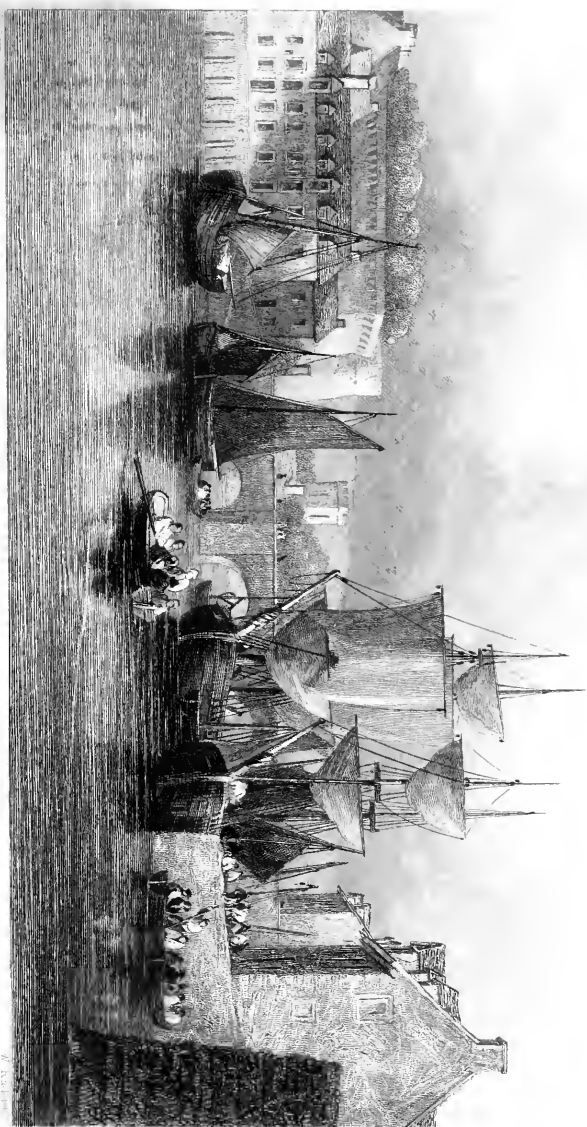
As I stood on the high land of the coast, the scene was full before me, invested with all the interest belonging to its real facts and marvels. Centuries have passed away since the first Lord of Cemaes, a Norman adventurer, anchored in the clear, calm bay of Fishguard, then a little fishing village known by the name of Abergwayn; and afterwards won, by his good sword, the first independent territory from the ancient princes of Wales. The little height of Cronllwyn, on the western side of the great Perselly range, marks the insulated spot where the daring invader in defiance unfurled his standard. His onward course was the mountain pass, disputed with fearful obstinacy by the men of Morvill; but victory was with the Norman, he crossed the highest ridge, with his long line of martial followers, and on a heathy plain,—‘the upland of the aimless bow,’—at the foot of the pass of Bwlchgwynt, the terrified inhabitants, dismayed by the number and force of his military array, laid down their arms, unstrung their bows, and submitted to him as a conqueror.

Not far distant stood the Castle of Newport, desolate in its ruins, which was built by the Norman, and became the chief baronial residence of the first Lord Marcher. Its deep moat, its grand gateway, its fallen towers, and its ample remains attest the former strength of the place, and the architecture of the age in which it reared its proud head. Newport is now a straggling town, meanly built, and presenting a painful contrast to its former power and importance. It is little deserving of remark, except for the extraordinary Cromlech of Pentre Evan, and the great number of Druidical remains that enrich its neighbourhood.

I pursued my way to Cardigan, the capital of the county, which stands on the northern bank of the Teivy, at the edge of a province called, in early times, the Red Valley. One of the finest rivers in the Principality, rising in the summit of the mountainous region to the north-east, the Teivy flows, with almost unequalled grandeur, into the capacious bay. Over the river is an ancient stone bridge of seven arches, and at one end a building in which, it is reported, Giraldus preached the crusade. Cardigan Castle, built in the reign of Henry II. was of considerable size and strength. Few fortresses have undergone greater vicissitudes than this. Raised in a lawless age, it has passed into the possession of successive masters, as fraud or violence gave to each the superiority. Its walls have been by turns manned and assailed by Norman, English, and Welsh; and the bow, the javelin, the battle axe, and the cannon, have each done the work of destruction, both in its attack and defence. The war-cry of many nations has been raised from its lofty towers; and the peaceful stream of the Teivy, that washed its massy walls in the day of its strength, and was often stained with the blood of hostile









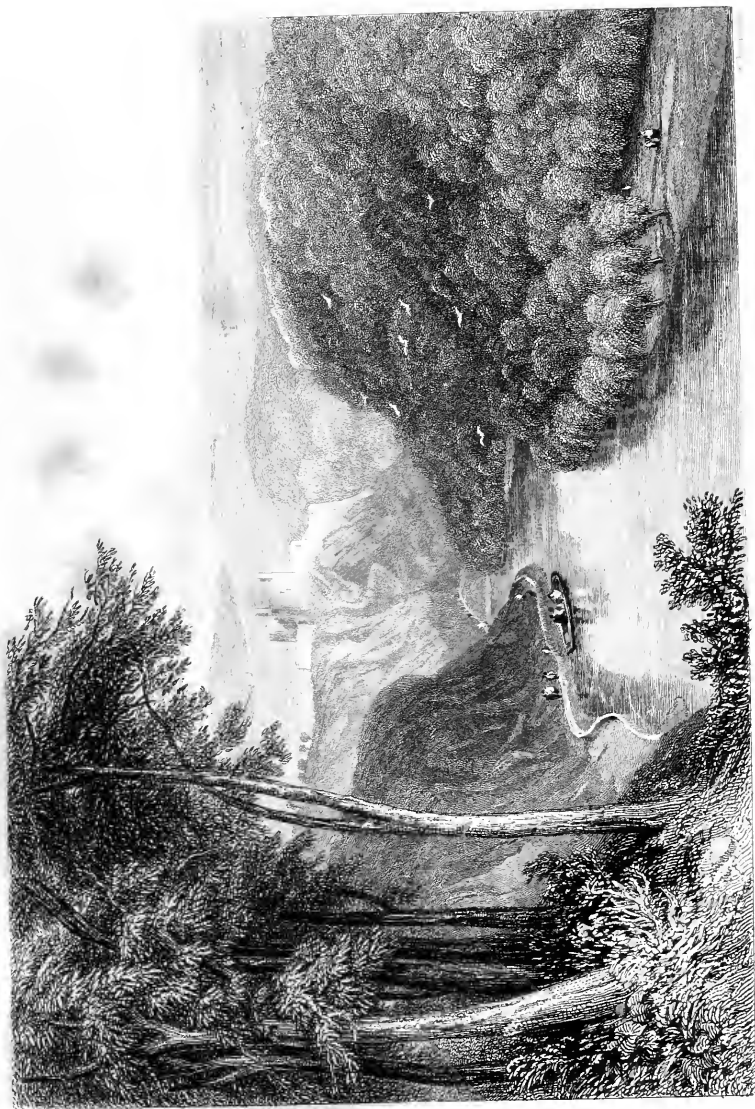
combatants, now rolls its silent tide, in an undisturbed current, by its ruins. Nor has this celebrated fortress been alone the scene of contest and violence. It has had its high and solemn days of festivity and regal magnificence, and the splendid entertainment of Cwdwgan ranks amongst the most distinguished of that age of early minstrelsy and song, and feudal hospitality. Its power and existence, however, terminated in the civil wars, at which time it was held in the name of the King, but yielded at last, like many others, to the bravery and perseverance of the Parliamentary forces under General Laugharne. All that I now looked upon was the ruined wall, the grey tower, and the scarcely distinguished boundary, that marked what its enduring strength and ample area had once been.

Fixing Cardigan as my head quarters for a few days, I had some pleasant opportunities of making aquatic excursions upon the beautiful river Teivy, sailing up or down as the scenery invited, or my fancy might lead me; and occasionally leaving my little bark on the stream, and rambling, in all the ecstasy of invigorated spirits, along its sinuous and ever-varied banks. This is an unfrequented district by the ordinary tourist, because apparently a little diverging from the usual track, but to me a more inviting one from that circumstance. The Teivy, which is the barrier river between the counties of Pembroke and Cardigan, presents at every turn, in its devious course, the peculiar beauties of both. At one time it winds its silent way between the hills, filling the intervening space with its clear deep waters; except, indeed, where sometimes a narrow path is saved, seemingly to entice the foot of the delighted passenger;—its high and sloping banks covered with trees of the richest verdure, now gracefully dipping their

pendent branches in the stream, or bristling on the summit in the stately forms of the fir and pine,—and then again, as if rejoicing at its escape from such seclusion, sending its laughing tide, through many a richly-wooded and romantic dale, in full career to the main.

Unmooring my boat at Cardigan, I pulled into the current of the stream, and soon reached that part where the river becomes contracted,—gliding amongst rocky eminences, which rise on either side, occasionally broken into broad and picturesque masses, and as often relieved and insulated by intervening quarries and openings. The passage of the river discloses a continued variety of objects: not a few of the reaches, which its perpetual windings afford, are eminently beautiful, and offer a combination of rock and foliage, of quarry, level green, and many-coloured mosses, in constant and gratifying succession, throwing a singular air of loveliness and repose over the whole scene.









CHAPTER XIII.

KILGARRAN—CARMARTHEN—VALE OF THE TOWEY—LLANDILO—KIDWELLY.

‘ If thou art worn and hard beset
With sorrows that thou wouldst forget—
If thou wouldst read a lesson that will keep
Thy heart from fainting, and thy soul from sleep,
Go to the woods and hills!—no tears
Dim the sweet look that Nature wears.’

At a distance of five miles from Cardigan, immediately following a graceful bend of the river, the noble Castle of Kilgarran bursts suddenly on the view. It was evening when I first saw this stupendous pile of interesting ruins. The moon shone with unequalled beauty and clearness. My bark lay silent upon the tranquil stream, under the shadow of two projecting capes, on one of which, rising perpendicularly from the bed of the river, the Castle once stood in commanding majesty; but now in solitude, sadness, and desolation. As I gazed upon it, my mind ran over the stirring events associated with its history, and recalled its localities, with which from description I had become familiar. There were the frowning bastions and curtain walls, built on a line with the foundation-rock, seeming to grow from their base, as if to defy with it the

ravages of time and the enemy. On the east, deep ravines, fretted by the mountain torrents in their headlong course to the Teivy, had insulated it from the surrounding high land. On the west, lay the winding path which connected the peaceful village of Kilgarran with the Castle, and its five ample entrances. Within, ward after ward, of various extents, involving the keep and all the state apartments, displayed the massy strength and magnificent dimensions of this once-famous fortress. Its history marks the insecurity and vicissitudes of a state of society in which right is made to yield to the force of arbitrary power. English, Welsh, Norman, and Fleming, had successively shared in its possession, and warriors, of all these tribes, poured from its open gates, on expeditions of war and conquest; or had presented their serried and devoted lines in its protracted and obstinate defence. All was now hushed. These busy and tumultuous generations slept with their fathers, and left this scene to be contemplated by a solitary traveller, like myself, under the influence of feelings and reflections such as these sad memorials were peculiarly fitted to inspire. I would say of Kilgarran Castle, to the reader, as the Northern Magician has sung of the celebrated Abbey in his native land, in these lines:—

‘ If thou would’st view fair Melrose aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight.’

Two or three miles from Kilgarran is the pleasant village of Kenarth, near which there is a romantic fall of the Teivy, forming a salmon leap, over a ledge of rocks of considerable height. From the bridge, over the noisy stream, is an interesting though secluded panoramic view, comprising the river, a picturesque water-mill, and the church and village of Kenarth. The bold, dark foreground beautifully reflects itself



in the shining waters. The gently swelling hills, gradually receding from the sight, mingle their blue summits with the sky. The richly variegated rocks, the quiet green paths winding along the river, the clamorous water-fowl wheeling about in restless eddies, the retreats of peaceful seclusion, all combine to give to this scene, when beheld in the fading light of the evening, features of wildness and beauty which cannot fail to produce a delightful impression on the mind.

Evening was beginning to spread her misty veil over the scene, as the Wanderer entered the little town of Newcastle Emlyn, intending to proceed onwards the following morning, and make Carmarthen his temporary home for a few days. Newcastle Emlyn is so connected with the borough of Adpar, in Cardiganshire, that they are usually considered as one town. They stand on either side of the Towey; Newcastle on the south, Adpar on the north bank; and, bending with the river, form an irregular street about a mile in length. Newcastle had a Roman origin, as old Camden supposes, and was anciently called Dinas Emlyn, or the city of Emlyn; but took its more recent name from the new castle, built by Sir Rhys ap Thomas, upon the site of the old fortress.* It was evening, as I said, when, following the course of the Towey, I entered

* A singular piece of treachery and retribution occurred in connection with this place. During a truce between King Henry of England and Llewellyn, Prince of Wales, Commissioners were appointed to meet at Emlyn, to negotiate a peace. Patrick de Canton, the King's lieutenant, while on his journey thither, 'learning that his own followers were more numerous than those of the Welsh deputies, laid a plan for their destruction, and attacked them with great violence while they were wholly unsuspecting of hostilities, and unprepared for defence. Several of their men were slain, and the chieftains themselves escaped with great difficulty. David, the Prince's brother, who was at the conference, immediately raised the country, and overtaking Patrick on his return, slew both him and the greater part of his attendants.'

this sequestered little place, occupying, as it does, only one of its delightful banks, and looking with friendly regard upon its opposite neighbour, the borough. I love the dim twilight of a Summer's day; it is the calm season of the tranquil spirit. The lingering landscape fades gradually from the sight, and, as day's last vestige silently departs, the mind, withdrawn from the attraction of external objects, intuitively looks inward, and takes up the thread of thought and reflection, or exercises the memory, or draws upon the powers of the imagination.

‘ Who hath not felt the softness of the hour
Sink on the heart, as dew along the flower?
Who hath not shared that calm, so still and deep,
The voiceless thought, that would not wake but weep?’

With the early dawn I surveyed the ruined fortress, (of which but few fragments now remain) standing upon an eminence just at the point to which the Teivy advances its broad stream, and then, gracefully curving, sends forward its reflux waters to wander through the green meadows, on its way to the sea at Cardigan Bay.

Leaving the Castle and the playful Teivy, I bent my steps across the country, over a wild and mountainous district, through Cynwyl Elfed, pausing only to visit a remarkable Cromlech in its neighbourhood. This tract presents but little that can claim attention or interest the feelings of the traveller, until within a few miles of Carmarthen; when a scene of remarkable splendour bursts unexpectedly upon the delighted sight, comprehending a portion of the Vale of the Towy, the Glamorganshire hills, part of the eastern arm of Milford Haven, the town and Castle of Kidwelly, and a distant expanse bounded only by the far horizon.

Does the traveller desire to see the characteristic beauties

of this pleasant land combined together, or scattered over comparatively but a small space, and thus presented almost at once within his reach. Let him take up his pilgrim's staff, and bend his steps, like the Wanderer, towards this picturesque county, where every diversity of mountain, river, coast, and valley scenery awaits him. Although the height of the mountains is not so great as in North Wales, yet in the district round Llyn y Van, Carreg-llwyd Carnyd, and Trichrug are found scenes which cannot be exceeded for romantic grandeur and sublimity. The county is watered by many interesting rivers, the chief of which is the Towey. It rises in Cardiganshire, and derives its first waters from an extensive morass on the hills near Tregaron, entering Carmarthenshire at the north-eastern extremity. It continues its course southerly to Llandovery, where it receives the united current of the rivers Bran and Gwdderig. It then runs past Langadoc and Llandilo Vawr, receiving many small tributary streams from the numerous mountains in this district. From Llandilo the Towey pursues its way westerly to Carmarthen, passing by and adding to the beauty of the scenery around Dynevor, Grongar Hill, Golden Grove, Middleton Hall, and other places celebrated for their sylvan beauties and historic interest. Besides the Towey there are other interesting rivers—the Tave, rising near the Percelly range; the Gwendraeth Vawr; the Lloughor, having its source in the Black mountains, with many others of smaller size—'rivers unknown to song.'

Carmarthen is pleasantly situated at the western extremity of the Vale of the Towey, and is in some parts of considerable elevation, giving it a commanding prospect of that river, with the fine stone bridge, of many arches, that spans it, and the delightful valley stretching beyond. If there be a charm

which makes one spot of earth more than another dear to the eye of the traveller, that charm is to be found in the power it possesses to call up the associations of his personal history, or to bring together his imagination and feelings with events which are connected with it, in the passage of ages long since gone by. In these events are made audible the otherwise silent footfalls of Time. The chronicler hears the sound, and detects the Ancient in his stealthy flight, and before his scythe can perform its destructive office, he notes them on his scroll, and this becomes history to following generations. And so it has been with this interesting place. The Egyptian geographer* has recorded it as the *Maridunum* of its Roman conquerors, and Carmarthen was once the capital of a district, towards which were converged the two great sections of that famous road, which traversed coast and mountain, called the *Strata Julia*. The pleasant sights and peaceful tracks that now detain the traveller's lingering steps, beheld the march of those mingled legions of haughty Rome, as they traversed, in warlike array, this region to camp or city, and from one line of conquest to another. But the period of Roman domination passed away, and the Welsh historian† relates, that it was a place of great strength in the times of its native rulers, and fortified with towers and high walls, the remains of which are now very inconsiderable, though there are still many traces of the ruins near the river. The County Goal is built on the foundation of the old Castle, of which tradition has handed to posterity but a scanty account. It is known, however, to have been the seat of the princes of the country, before the royal residence was transferred to Dinevaur. Both

* Ptolemy. † Giraldus.





the castle and the town have undergone the usual changes that belong to ages of violence and disputed possession, and in their vicissitudes have been besieged, destroyed, and again rebuilt.

The Church of St. Peter contains some singular and interesting monuments. The grotesque female figure kneeling on the south side of the chancel, by the aid of its quaint inscription, tells the beholder the story of extensive benevolence, and satisfies at the same time his curiosity by describing the subject as

‘ A choice Elixar of Mortalitie,

* * * * *

Who by her loanes in spit of Aduerse fates,

She did preserue Mens persons and Estates;

Would you then know who wen this good Woman

Twas virtuous ANNE the Lady VAUGHAN.’

Opposite to this excellent woman lie the recumbent figures of Sir Rhys ap Thomas and his lady. The gallant knight clothed in a suit of plate armour, with the insignia of his order and the emblazonry of family honours, and his lady in the modest costume of the age in which she lived, with an emblematic dove at her feet.

The traveller who looks upon these effigies in crumbling stone, now mutilated almost to obliteration, and calls to mind the stormy period in which the beings they are intended to represent once flourished, will not fail to rest his eye, with some interest, upon the subsequent pages, in which the Wanderer proposes to place before him the curious and surprising incidents of the personal history of this warrior and his family, and their connection with the important events then recurring in South Wales.

At the western suburb of the town is a monument commemorating the gallant deeds of Sir Thomas Picton,* who was killed at the battle of Waterloo. It was erected from a meagre and unsatisfactory design presented by Mr. Nash. On a square pedestal rises a Doric column, at the top of which is a statue of the General. On two sides of the pedestal were inscriptions, and on the others basso-relievos of the engagements at Waterloo and Badajoz, but so carelessly were they executed, that the weather has already nearly obliterated them. In 1829, the Rev. Edward Picton presented to the county a portrait of his brother, painted by the President of the Royal Academy, which is now suspended in the Grand Jury Room of the County Hall.

From Carmarthen to Llandilo (a distance of about fifteen miles) there are two roads which run nearly parallel with the

* ‘ Lieutenant General Sir Thomas Picton, G. C. B. memorable in the Peninsular campaigns as the leader of what was pre-eminently called the *fighting division*, known by the appellation of the *right hand* of Wellington. He received his death-wound in the daring enterprize of leading a charge of infantry against a solid square of French cavalry; an enterprize scarcely before attempted, except by Picton himself, who had more than once successfully executed it in the Peninsula. The Duke of Wellington, in his dispatch, passes a just eulogium on his worth. As soon as our Army was sent to Flanders, Government, it is stated, offered him the command of a division, but, apprehending the Duke of Wellington, as commander in chief, would leave the British force to some officer in whom he could not repose the same confidence, he declined the offer, adding, however, if the Duke should personally require his services, he would instantly repair to the Army. This requisition was made—and the General left the town on June the 11th, and on the 18th, terminated his honourable career in the field of glory! He had made his will before his departure—he did not expect to return; but observed to a friend, that when he heard of his death, he would hear of a bloody day.—The following pleasing trait in his character may be relied on:—Some time after relinquishing the Government of Trinidad, the inhabitants voted him 5000*l.* as a testimony of their esteem. When a dreadful fire laid the capital in ashes some time after this, a subscription was opened for the relief of the sufferers, and the General eagerly seized the opportunity of appropriating the 5000*l.* to that object.’

Towey, and on either side that river, along each of which are many objects of great attraction and interest for the antiquary and lover of nature. I determined first to examine the north or upper road, and see the hoary ruins of Dryslyn Castle,—Grongar Hill, over which the poet Dyer has thrown such a halo of pleasant and quiet feeling,—the ancient royal fortress and park of Dynevor, making Llandilo my resting place for a few days, and returning by the lower road through Golden Grove to Carmarthen.

On leaving Carmarthen, on the opposite side of the Towey stands Llangunnor Hill, below which is seen a farm house called Ty Gwyn (the white house), and is that in which Sir Richard Steele* lived for many years, and wrote several essays and dramatic pieces. It is situated in the centre of the small estate he inherited from the Sherlock family. After his profusion and improvidence in the metropolis, and the consequent embarrassments he experienced, he lived here in

* Many humorous anecdotes are related of Sir Richard, which throw some light upon his habits and character. Sending one morning for Savage, the poet, without any previous conversation, he requested him to step into his carriage, and was followed by Sir Richard, when the coachman drove to a small tavern near Hyde Park Corner. Sir Richard then informed him that he intended to publish a pamphlet, and wished him to write while he dictated. After dining they again proceeded with the pamphlet, which was finished in the evening, when Savage expected Sir Richard would call for the reckoning, and return home. How was he surprised when informed, that the pamphlet must be sold before the dinner could be paid for! and Savage was, therefore, obliged to go and offer the production for sale, and procured two guineas for it. Sir Richard then returned home, having retired for the day to avoid his creditors. On another occasion, Sir Richard having invited a party to dinner, his visitors were surprised at the number of liveries which surrounded the table; after dinner, one of them inquiring, how such an extensive train of domestics could be consistent with his fortune, Sir Richard frankly confessed they were fellows of whom he would very willingly be rid—that they were bailiffs; and since he could not send them away, he had thought it convenient to embellish them with liveries.

comparative seclusion, intending by economy, and by the exertion of his literary powers, to acquire a sufficient income to liquidate the debts contracted by his former extravagance, and to maintain with credit his rank in society. This amiable and eminent man, towards the end of his life, was carried by two servants, in an open chair, about the neighbourhood.

Two miles on the road is the village of Abergwilli. It was at this place that the good Prince Llewellyn fought an obstinate battle with Rhun, an adventurer from Scotland, calling himself the son of Prince Meredith. The adventurer ranged his troops in order of battle, and exhorted them to courage and constancy, but withdrew privately during the contest to a place of safety where he might watch the event. The brave Prince, on the contrary, was seen wherever the battle raged the most fiercely, and by his valour achieved a victory in which his enemy was slain, notwithstanding his efforts to escape.

Near to the village, and just at that point where a most romantic bend of the Towey washes the margin of the lawn, stands the episcopal palace belonging to the Bishop of Saint David, commanding a view of this majestic river in its re-fluent meanderings up the vale, before it resumes its onward course towards the sea. The Towey, when it leaves its early mountain-track, and receives the united streams of the Bran and Gwdderig, seems to revel with its accumulated waters through the rich valley that bears its name; at one time rolling in an impetuous headlong torrent, and then circling with a gentle current almost from side to side, as if to lave some favoured spot, or to expend its joy in sportive gambols, separating as it flows the whole extent into distinct portions of great beauty. About a mile beyond Abergwilli is one of

these little dells, through which a clear and nameless stream pursues its way from the hills to bury itself in the channel of the river. On the western side of this little dell an eminence rises, called Merlin's Hill, which tradition has assigned as the birth-place of this extraordinary man; near the brow is an opening in the rocks, which the country people still credulously show as the place in which the seer practised his incantations.

' There the wise Merlin whylome wont, they say,
To make his wonne, low underneath the ground,
In a deep delve, far from the view of day,
That of no living wight he mote be found,
When so he counseld, with his sprights encompass round.'

Ascending the hill yet higher, an extensive view presents itself of the vale as far as the hill above Llanarthney.

Passing on two miles further I reached Pont ar Cothy, which extensive stream, rising in the north-eastern limits of the county, forms a junction with the Towey about a mile below the bridge. The antiquarian will find subjects for his research in this neighbourhood, amongst the remains of an old castle, on an elevated part of the western bank of the Cothy, within two miles of the road to Llandilo, and of another fortress, three miles beyond this, on the eastern side of the stream.

It was early morning, and just as the sun had emerged from his cloudy pavilion, when I started from Carmarthen to explore the abundant beauties of the district of the Towey. It was now noon, and that great luminary was on his southern track, but attended by such a retinue of turbid and ever-shifting clouds, as made me apprehend a fearful thunder storm. I therefore hastened onwards by Llanegwad, passing close to the river where it bends in serpentine evolutions

amidst the luxuriant pasture-land at Wern-ddu. Opposite to this place, looking over the Towey, rises Nelson's Tower, erected by Sir William Paxton to commemorate the victory and death of that hero, and which forms one of the most conspicuous points in the vale. I now struck off from the main road, and turning to the right reached Felindre, and crossing the Dulas, a little tributary stream, came to Drysllyn Castle. The ruins of this ancient stronghold are situated on a bold green eminence, which rises like an island in the midst of a wide opening in the valley, and overhangs the western shore of the Towey. From the summit of these ruins is one of the finest prospects in the vale, extending to the eastward eight or ten miles, and they themselves form an interesting object when viewed from the surrounding scenery.

Drysllyn Castle once occupied a large space of ground, but its remains are now very inconsiderable, comprising only some fragments of the walls, and a part of one of the towers. It was erected by one of the princes of the house of Dynevor, and was amongst the last of the possessions which they were permitted to retain. It has heard the song of minstrelsy within its ancient halls, and beleaguering hosts have set themselves down before its gates in deadly array. Near the spot where I stood, its massy wall had given way from the operations of a secret mine, and buried in its fall the besieging generals, Stafford and Monchency, with many of their officers. *Sic transit gloria mundi*, I ejaculated, as I turned my saddened steps away to pursue my solitary wanderings. The storm which I had feared, or anticipated, had passed unbroken away. The clouds which had dogged the sun in his course had been dissipated, or drawn off, like a retiring host, to a distant part of the heavens, and as I left the ruined Castle the sun again shone forth with increased splendour.

The foot track to the eastward led me over the rising ground by Pentre Bach, a few hundred yards beyond which rises the side of Grongar Hill. This celebrated place is much indebted both to history and poetry for the fame which it has so long enjoyed, and for the charm that still rests upon it. On its summit there have been traced, in later years, vestiges of a Roman encampment, with the usual rectangular entrenched area, which old Leland saw in his time, and which he describes with his usual minuteness and simplicity. ‘Ther is,’ he says, ‘within halfe a myle of Drislan Castel on Tewe, a mightye campe of men of Warre, with 4 or 5 diches, and an area in the middle.’ But Grongar Hill, like the Man of Ross, is indebted principally to the force of friendship and the fervour of poetry for the interest it has so long enjoyed. Who has not connected with the earliest associations of his mind the beauties with which the pen of Dyer* has invested it, and cherished amongst his most ardent anticipations, the impassioned desire to make a pilgrimage to this delightful spot?

‘Grongar Hill invites my song,
Draw the landscape bright and strong :
Grongar, in whose mossy cells,
Sweetly musing, Quiet dwells ;
Grongar, in whose silent shade,
For the modest Muses made,
So oft I have, the evening still,
At the fountain of a rill,

* Dyer was born at the mansion called Aberglasney, on the estate, in 1700, and was educated for the profession of the law : but after the death of his father, he became a pupil of Richardson, an eminent artist of that day, and went to Rome for improvement in his art. Afterwards he relinquished painting, studied for the Church, and procured the livings of Coningsley and Kirkby, in Leicestershire.

Sat upon a flow'ry bed,
 With my hand beneath my head ;
 While stray'd my eyes o'er Towey's flood,
 Over mead, and over wood.

* * * * *
 Now I gain the mountain's brow :
 What a landscape lies below !
 No clouds, no vapours intervene,
 But the gay, the open scene
 Does the face of nature show,
 In all the hues of heaven's bow ;
 And, swelling to embrace the light,
 Spreads around beneath the sight ;
 Old castles on the cliffs arise,
 Proudly tow'ring in the skies.

* * * * *
 Gaudy, as the opening dawn,
 Lies a long and level lawn,
 On which a dark hill, steep and high,
 Holds and charms the wandering eye ;
 Deep are his feet in Towey's flood,
 His sides are cloth'd with waving wood,
 And ancient towers crown his brow,
 That cast an awful look below ;
 Whose ragged walls the ivy creeps,
 And with her arms from falling keeps.'

I descended the hill, and bade adieu both to the historian and the poet, as the sun's last rays were resting on the opposite eminence above Golden Grove. For awhile he seemed to hang his shining orb on its highest pinnacle, as if to bid a glorious farewell to the hemisphere he was about to leave, and then withdrew, leaving the refractions of his brightness to fringe the mountain peaks of Llangathan, and to

spread a line of light along the surrounding ridge. The misty shades of evening were gathering around me when I gained the high road about three miles from Llandilo Vawr. It was not long ere I reached this little town, and took up my quarters at the Cawdor Arms. In its excellent accommodations, and at its bountiful table, I refreshed myself, after a day of more than usual fatigue and pleasure, intending to make my visit to the grounds of Dynevor on the following morning, and to spend another day in exploring those dreary mountains, among which Carreg Cennen Castle rears its towering head; afterwards to return to Carmarthen along the vale, by the southern road, taking Golden Grove, and other objects of interest, in my way.

Llandilo Vawr is a picturesque little place, occupying the sloping sides of a hill, the ridge of which is the centre of the town, and the main road through it. It is built close to the edge of Dynevor Park, and just above the Towey, which here makes one of its capricious evolutions amongst the luxuriant meadows. The river is crossed on the southern road by a substantial bridge, erected by the well-known Welsh architect, David Edwards. The country round Llandilo abounds with so many objects to interest the tourist, that it ought to be made his rendezvous for a few days:* and since the Cawdor Arms has been established, there is no lack of excellent accommodation, even for the most fastidious. To the angler this place affords abundant sport, from the salmon and trout fishing to be found in the Towey, and in several small streams

* To those who can spare only one day, I would recommend the following excursion from Llandilo:—through Dynevor Park to the old Castle; Llangathen Mountain, above Grongar Hill; Dryslyn Castle: then cross the river at the ferry to Nelson's Tower, and return through Golden Grove.

around. It is the best point, also, from which to make excursions to the romantic scenery in the mountainous districts about Carreg Cennen, and along the rich and quiet retreats that form the most attractive beauties of the vale.

Llandilo Vawr is not without its historical interest, for Caradoc mentions that the decisive battle between the armies of Edward the First and Prince Llewellyn, which subjected Wales to the sovereignty of England, was fought near this town, in 1282. On this occasion the King's forces were commanded by the Earl of Gloucester and Sir Edmund Mortimer, who achieved the victory at a great sacrifice of life.

The following morning was unusually fine, and the air delightfully fresh and invigorating. Long before the sun's rays had dissipated the early mist, I entered Dynevor Park by the little gate beside the main entrance, accompanied by an intelligent guide acquainted with the neighbouring localities. On proceeding only a few yards to an elevated part of the grounds, a scene of surpassing beauty bursts upon the sight. The green and sloping lawns, studded with stately trees, swell and extend before the eye. The tower of the old Castle rears its hoary head above the tall oaks by which it is surrounded. Just opposite, glowing in beauty, stands Golden Grove. The fertile valley, radiant in sunshine, with the clear, playful waters of the Towy, stretch right onward, while the aspiring mountains beyond, far far away, close the wonderful scene. Directed by the guide, I bent my steps a few hundred yards to the left, towards an eminence called Venland Vawr, on which two groups of tall firs stand conspicuous, protecting the visitor from the heat of the sun, and affording by their shade the opportunity of quietly surveying the surrounding beauties. With the exception of the view from the Deer



Park, the prospects from this place are amongst the finest which the valley affords.

Standing on this spot, which nearly bisects the vale, the view to the north-east, looking up the stream, extends over the district of Llangadock almost to Llandovery, comprehending in its more easterly range the high black Mountain of Trichrug. Towards the south rise the hills around Carreg Cennen Castle, and the towering summits of Mynydd Du. Below is the ever-fresh and rolling river, from the banks of which spreads the domain of Golden Grove, stretched as in a map before the sight.

Pursuing my way towards the Castle, I passed a deep dingle, covered with immense trees and underwood, rendered almost transparent by the powerful rays of the sun which played upon it. A little beyond, near the junction of two winding roads, from almost opposite directions, an interesting and delightful landscape presents itself; and again, and again, as I followed out the path, new and fresh combinations of natural beauty become evolved from the rich and varied elements so profusely gathered into this favoured place. Diverging to the left, I passed through a kind of avenue of full-grown ash, which leads to the mouldering ruins of this once-splendid residence, now embosomed in aged trees, that seem to claim an ancestry coeval with the fortress itself.

The remains of the royal Castle of Dynevor are considerable; one large tower, and some of the walls, continue almost entire. From the most authentic accounts, the Castle appears to have been erected in 877, by Roderique the Great, and was in the possession of Rhys ap Theodore, who probably extended its site in the reign of William the Conqueror. Giraldus mentions this fortress in his Itinerary. Soon after

his time it was greatly damaged; but, being rebuilt and fortified, it became the seat of the Princes of the country. It was besieged by the forces of Henry the First in 1226; a sanguinary contest took place, and he was repulsed, with the loss of two thousand men, by Prince Llewellyn. It was alternately held by opposing belligerent parties, until, falling into the secure possession of the crown, it was granted by Henry VII. to Sir Rhys ap Thomas, a descendant of the Welsh Princes, and ancestor of the present possessor of the estate.

‘ Yet time has seen, that lifts the low,
And level lays the lofty brow—
Has seen this broken pile complete,
Big with the vanity of state.’

I ascended what was once the round tower, built over a tremendous precipice on the south east, and which formed one of the angles of the castle wall. From its topmost height I beheld a prospect the most varied, luxuriant, and enchanting, that the eye ever ranged over. The rich woods clothing the precipitous descent of the castellated hill, down to the water’s edge, and the valley stretching off from its base, arrayed in green of the loveliest hue, intersected and enlivened by the sportive meanderings of the river. Within reach of the vision were comprehended all of hill or valley scenery; the bleak mountain summits, rarely trodden except by the solitary foot of the curious traveller; and the verdant, tranquil pastures, teeming with life and plenty; with here and there those distinguished spots of earth, which history and poetry have combined to invest with never-failing interest and immortality.

Dynevor will afford a day’s enjoyment—‘a Summer’s day,’ as Yorick says,

‘ From morn to dewy eve.’

And so it did to the Wanderer, who lingered amongst its beauties till the young moon lighted his steps homewards to mine host's of the Cawdor Arms.

To the south-east of Llandilo Vawr, in the most bleak and inhospitable district of South Wales, surrounded by a chain of almost inaccessible mountains, stands Carreg Cennen Castle. Behind this barrier of everlasting hills are deep, wide valleys, in the lowest channel of which the Cennen rolls its stream, after rain, with the headlong fury of a mountain torrent. From the edge of this stream rises an insulated and almost perpendicular peak, on the summit of which, covering the whole extent, frowns this stronghold of feudal power, which is only accessible on one side. It owes its erection to one of the lords of Is Cennen, a knight of King Arthur's Round Table, and its present remains exhibit its ample arrangements and impregnable strength. It commands a prospect of prodigious extent, comprehending a large reach of the finest part of the vale of the Towey, the vale of Llangyndeirn, with the ocean in the distance, and the vale of Llandybie, with a considerable portion of the vale of Llaughor beyond it.

It was with the first rays of the morning sun that I commenced my walk to Carreg Cennen Castle, and before the inhabitants of the little town I had left had resumed the busy occupations of the day, I had plunged deep into the wild cwms that separate the mountain range connected with the Trichrug from the remarkable fortress to which I was pursuing my way. After surveying all the wonders which I have already described to the reader, I set my face again towards that 'river of romance,' whose picturesque shores had so long attracted my vagrant steps. My next resting place was in the refreshing shades of Golden Grove, one of the seats of Lord Cawdor.

The former house, belonging to the family of the Vaughans, was seated near the banks of the Towey; but the new one, built by the present proprietor, is erected in the centre of the estate, commanding the sweep of the green lawn in front, and the meadows which fringe it on the north to the river's brink, and the grey tower of old Dynevor,—on the west, the graceful line of Grongar Hill. This place will ever be associated in the mind of the English reader with the remembrance of that excellent man, Jeremy Taylor. Here he sought shelter* during the time of the civil wars between Charles I. and his Parliament, and in this place he composed many of his valuable works of practical devotion.

Dr. Rust, his biographer, thus describes the commencement of his career as a Divine of the English church, when he was called upon to supply, for a time, the place of lecturer at St. Paul's Cathedral. 'Here he preached,' says Rust, 'to the admiration and astonishment of his auditory, and by his florid and youthful beauty, and sweet and pleasant air, and sublime and raised discourses, he made his hearers take him for some young angel newly descended from the visions of glory.'

In the following eulogium the same biographer sums up his character, after the close of that career in death:—'Nature,' says he, 'had befriended him much in his constitution; for he was a person of a most sweet and obliging humour, of great

* At the commencement of this struggle, Taylor joined the King at Oxford, and dedicated his time and pen to his service. Previously to the termination of Charles's misfortunes, Taylor received from him, in token of his regard, his watch, and a few pearls and rubies, which had ornamented the ebony case in which he kept his Bible. He suffered much, and was several times imprisoned, during the Protectorate of Cromwell; but at the Restoration, the smile of Royal favour played upon him, and he became successively Bishop of Down and Connor, Chancellor of the University of Dublin, and Member of the Irish Privy Council.

candour and ingenuity ; and there was so much of salt and fineness of wit, and prettiness of address in his familiar discourses, as made his conversation have all the pleasantness of a comedy, and all the usefulness of a sermon ; his soul was made up of harmony, and he never spake but he charmed his hearers, not only with the clearness of his reason, but all his words, and his very tones and cadences, were strangely musical.*

It was drawing towards the close of the day when I reached Kidwelly, a little town once rivalling the port of Carmarthen, but now much lessened and reduced, standing on both sides of the lesser Gwendraeth, which is here crossed by a handsome stone bridge. The Castle, which occupies a bold rocky eminence on the western side of the Gwendraeth fath, forms the object of greatest interest to the traveller. There is an air of solemn magnificence in the appearance of this edifice, and its remains are, perhaps, in a more perfect state than those of any similar structure in the Principality. The strength of this fortress corresponded with the important part it sustained in the perpetual conflicts which marked the early history of the country. The massy walls which enclosed its square area were not only fortified by strong angular towers, but also at measured intervals by lesser ones, by means of which its defenders could readily communicate assistance to each other, or interrupt any temporary success on the part of its besiegers. Its magnificent gateway to the west was protected and ornamented by two lofty round towers, which are still in tolerable

* It is one, amongst many others, of the curious anomalies which human history supplies, that the author of the *Liberty of Prophesying*, one of the most liberal works of that age, was the admired and affectionately-beloved protégée of the proud, arbitrary, and vindictive Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury.

preservation. This castle was built by the Norman adventurer, William de Londres, and changed possessors with the various dominant masters of this unhappy country, during its state of feudal government and civil warfare. It passed into the possession of the famous Sir Rhys ap Thomas in the time of Henry the Seventh, and was finally devised to Lord Cawdor by one of the family of the Vaughans, of Golden Grove.





W. H. Stodart

THE VESSEL IN THE WATER.



CHAPTER XIV.

Sir Rhys ap Thomas.

Plantag.—SINCE you are tongue-ty'd, and so loth to speak,
In dumb significants proclaim your thoughts;
Let him that is a true-born gentleman,
And stands upon the honour of his birth,
If he suppose that I have pleaded truth,
From off this briar pluck a white rose with me.

Som.—Let him that is no coward, nor no flatterer,
But dare maintain the party of the truth,
Pluck a red rose from off this thorn with me.

War.—I love no colours, and, without all colour
Of base insinuating flattery,
I pluck this white rose with Plantagenet.

Suff.—I pluck this red rose, with young Somerset,
And say, withal, I think he held the right.

Shakspeare.

HENRY the Fifth of England, or, as he was called in his youth, Harry of Monmouth, had finished a brilliant career of military achievements at the Castle of Vincennes in France, and the sceptre of Britain passed from the hands of one of its bravest and most vigorous princes into those of his baby successor. The imbecility of the child was followed by the incapacity of the man; and the reign of Henry the Sixth gave rise to that ferocious civil contest,

known best by the name of the war of the White and Red Roses. It was in the wild mountains of Wales that the White Rose, the emblem of the House of York, first budded, and afterwards became the signal of victory in the sanguinary and well-fought fields of St. Albans, Northampton, Mortimer's Cross, and on the plains of Santon.

At this time, Gruffydd ap Nicholas, (whose descendants became at a subsequent period the Lords of Abermarlais, in Carmarthenshire,) exercised great power and influence in the southern division of the Principality. Ambitious, turbulent, and crafty, he was well-fitted to play a conspicuous part in the stirring times in which he lived. Too choleric to be long at peace with his powerful neighbours, he was alternately engaged in deadly feuds with the leaders and adherents of both the contending parties that disturbed the empire. Consistent and unremitting only in his hatred to the English, he permitted his retainers to commit continual depredations upon the possessions of the Lords Marchers, and to pillage their lands. The injury thus inflicted upon the English Borders was too great and frequent to pass unnoticed, and in one of those occasional pauses in this age of civil strife, the quietness of exhaustion rather than the repose of peace, Gruffydd was cited before the King's Court to answer for his violence and contumacy, and Lord Whitney and other Commissioners were sent into Wales to investigate his conduct. Gruffydd, who had heard of the Commission, but was not fully informed of its object, laid his plans with the craftiness, and executed them with the boldness, peculiar to his character. He contrived to dissipate any fears which the Commissioners might have entertained from his formidable power, by meeting them on their

entry into Carmarthenshire, himself meanly drest, and accompanied only by four or five attendants 'raggedlie attired,' and as miserably mounted. Right glad was Lord Whitney to find the truculent Welshman, as he thought, then in his power, and not a little astonished was he also to hear him, with apparent affability and confidence, offer his services to conduct the Commissioners to Carmarthen, the place of their destination. The party moved forward in high glee, each speculating with secret satisfaction upon his success, and conversing with that ease and volubility which belongs naturally to persons so well content with themselves.

Their road followed the windings of the Bran as far as the little town of Llandovery, near which that river unites with the Gwydderig in its confluence with the Towey. On the western bank, situate on a rocky eminence, the castle looked over the whole extent of the romantic vale of the Bran. The united waters of these celebrated streams formed then, as now, that majestic river which is the glory of this part of the Principality. The English lord and the Commissioners in their official array, followed by the humble Welshman with his tattered attendants, crossed the river by the fine stone bridge a little below the town, and pushed forward in a brisk trot towards the princely mansion of Abermarlais.

The thick woods that lined the shores of the Towey completely hid the towers of the castle from the view of the approaching party. A graceful curving of the road, however, brought them unexpectedly to the foot of the gentle eminence on which it stood. Gruffydd, turning to the surprised Commissioners, and pointing to the open postern, pressed them with a smile to enter and refresh themselves, and leading the way across the drawbridge, ushered the party into the spacious

court yard. The wily Welshman was received with demonstrations of the most profound respect by his son Thomas, at the head of a troop of a hundred horsemen, handsomely drest and gallantly mounted, and the astonished Commissioners looked upon an array that began to open their eyes to the power and consequence of their companion.

It was not Gruffydd's design that the Commissioners should see too much at once, especially as he had observed that the English lord betrayed some degree of surprise and alarm at the number and excellent appointments of his son's armed retinue; and, therefore, after having well refreshed themselves, the whole party, including the horsemen, defiled from the castle at a round pace, in seeming confidence and cordiality.

‘A goodly country this,’ said Lord Whitney to his companion, ‘and easily defended, with your mountain passes and these stout yeomen.’

‘My Lord will at least perceive,’ said Gruffydd, ‘that I am willing to do him honour, whatever may be the object of his visit to these parts.’

Gruffydd had placed a peculiar emphasis upon the word *object*, which at first startled the Commissioner, and he remained thoughtful for a considerable time. As the party wound round a long and sinuous defile which skirted the rocky ridge that in this place beetles above the very shores of the Towy, giving such a picturesque character to the scene, the ancient fortress of Dynevor, not far from the town of Llandilo Fawr, then the stronghold of one of the sons of Gruffydd, suddenly broke upon their view. It was at a considerable distance from the road where it was first discovered by the leading horsemen. The castle stood on

the most bold and precipitous eminence of this ridge, overlooking the course of the river, and commanding a view of the open country, and of every approach towards its walls. The party emerged from the defile, and ascended the easy winding road that had been formed on the eastern side of the fortress. Two strong towers of different architecture flanked the spacious court-yard at the northern and southern angles; the latter, standing immediately over a tremendous precipice, was used as the castle *donjon* in these barbarous times, and gave a fearful presage of the secret doom of many a poor wretch who had been its inhabitant. The area was surrounded by high massy walls of great thickness, and was sufficiently ample for the martial exercises of the garrison. Owen, the son of Gruffydd, received the Commissioners with great hospitality, at the head of a chosen body of two hundred horsemen under arms, and conducted them into the banquetting hall of the castle. Owen played the part of the host with admirable skill, and by his address contrived to draw from his guests the secret of the Commission, and to assure himself that to secure his father was the great object of their journey. Gruffydd and his sons concealed their discovery from the Commissioners, and, to prevent all suspicion, treated them with renewed hospitality and attention.

The whole party now pursued their way, increased as it was into a formidable company by the two sons of Gruffydd with their mounted retainers. The road hitherto had run along the base of that mountainous ridge which lines the northern side of the Towy, almost from Llandovery to Carmarthen, until it reaches that bright, open plain, where the Gwilli forms its junction with that river, giving its significant title to the little village of Abergwilli. The party had scarcely debouched

into the plain, before it was met by a splendid body guard of five hundred 'tall men' on foot, handsomely dressed, and well armed and accoutred, under the command of the elder son of Gruffydd.

Thus magnificently attended the Commissioners entered Carmarthen, then the capital of South Wales, and were conducted with the greatest ceremony to the sumptuous lodgings that had been prepared for them. Gruffydd now excused his further presence upon the Commissioners, and committed to his sons the care of seeing to their accommodation, and of attending upon them to the banquet that was prepared in the Guild Hall of the town.

Lord Whitney was not displeased to escape the keen observation of his companion, and finding himself now more at ease, privately sent for the Mayor and Sheriffs, and opening to them the Commission with which he was charged by the King, demanded their assistance to arrest Gruffydd, which it was agreed should be done on the following morning. The banquet was now prepared, and the Commissioners were escorted with much pomp by the sons of Gruffydd, attended by their men-at-arms, to the hall. The tables had been arranged along the centre of the floor, and, according to the architecture of these times, a row of pillars, with grotesque, fanciful carvings separated the upper end of the room, which was slightly elevated, and which was usually set apart for the most distinguished guests. To a seat purposely placed here, and splendidly hung with cloth of gold, Owen conducted Lord Whitney, and took his station immediately on his right. On each side of this elevated part of the spacious hall galleries had been raised, in which were placed the ancient bards of that land of minstrelsy. The guests betook themselves

with right good will to dispense the cheer which had been sumptuously provided, according to the profuse hospitality which then prevailed. Owen plyed his noble guest, during supper, with those sweet-spiced liquors which formed no inconsiderable part of the domestic expense of the nobles, the mixture of which was an art derived principally from the French, and was greatly esteemed by our ancestors in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

‘There was eke waxing many a spice
As clowe, gilofre, and licorice,
Gingibir, and grean de Paris,
Canell at setewale of pris,
And many a spice delitable
To eten whan men rise fro table.’

Ypocras and garhiofilac, as being the most prized at this period, with other ‘delicate and precious drinks,’ were lavishly distributed on this occasion, and served not a little to produce in the English Commissioners a state of convivial carelessness and hilarity. Owen was prepared to take advantage of this, and observing that Lord Whitney had put the Commission into the open sleeve of his cloak, he contrived to abstract it from thence unnoticed, and to place it securely in his own pocket. Then turning to Lord Whitney, with great significance, ‘Methinks our noble guest,’ he said, ‘should *lose* for awhile the weighty matters of state, that have doubtless brought him to these rude parts, and do the honour to this festive greeting which our country’s customs require. Hither, boy,’ beckoning to his attendant, ‘bring our family’s hirlas, and see that it lack not of that precious liquor which thy art has taught thee so delicately to prepare.’

In a few minutes the attendant returned, bearing the ample

hirlas, or drinking horn,—usually filled, and emptied at a draught, at great festive assemblies, which was at once the pledge of fidelity and the expression of personal hospitality. The hirlas which the Welshman presented to the English lord in this case was of large dimensions and graceful contour, finely polished, and richly inlaid with plates of solid silver, chased with the family names and device, and to which was pendant a massy chain of the same precious metal. Lord Whitney knew the custom to which his host alluded, and being too well satisfied with himself to oppose his humour, he drained the contents of the horn with evident satisfaction.

Owen now gave a sign to his favourite bard, Tudor Aled, whose fingers had for some time been gliding rapidly, though silently, over the strings of his harp, which was already placed to do honour to his own and his country's fame.

‘Minstrel,’ said Owen, ‘thou art wont to enliven our festivals with thy instrument, which I know thou boastest of, prepare now thy merriest strain, such as is suited to this high occasion, and let our noble guest hear what melody thy practised hand can call forth from that harp of thine.’

The bard waited not for further parley. He comprehended his patron's meaning, and after sweeping with flying fingers across the diapason of his instrument, as if to instruct his ear in the echoes he meant to awaken, he dashed at once into that bold festive song of the princely poet of his country.

‘Fill the HIRLAS HORN, my boy,
Nor let the tuneful lips be dry
That warble Owen's praise;—
Whose walls with warlike spoils are hung,
And open wide his gates are flung
In Cambria's peaceful days.

By Owen's arm the valiant bled;
From Owen's arm the coward fled
Aghast with wild affright;
Let then those haughty lords beware
How Owen's just revenge they dare,
And tremble at his sight.'

The guests were all hushed into breathless silence when the bard ceased; and as he gently put aside his harp, whose wild peculiar tones were still lingering in dying cadence within the spacious hall, he exhibited that striking and almost prophetic character, when, in their best days, before the cruel massacre of their order at Bangor, the Welsh bards animated their country's warriors to the fight, or sung their victories. His rich mantle of blue cloth, thickly embroidered with small figures in gold of the raven, his patron's crest, and lined with the fur of the beaver, an animal then not uncommon in the Principality, was fastened at the right shoulder by a massy clasp of polished gold; his vest or tunic was of azure silk, exposing the form of his ample chest as it expanded with the enthusiastic efforts of his minstrelsy; while, encircling his neck, a broad gold chain of twisted links, the gift of his patron, had hung gracefully vibrating during the rapid motion of his fingers as they passed along the instrument.

Lord Whitney was by this time in that enviable state of mental obscurity, from the strong potations that his wily neighbour had pressed upon him, that though he was sensible of a multitude of ideas floating like atoms through his brain, he was incapable of reducing them to any palpable shape or figure; or else, perhaps, he would not have failed to have noticed the singular coincidence of the minstrel's song, with the name and circumstances of his apparently friendly and

hospitable host. A flowing wassail cup of rich pyment concluded the entertainment of the evening, and the Commissioners were conducted to their lodgings, in a state of happy forgetfulness of the object of their journey, to sleep away the effects of their boisterous revelry.

Owen communicated to his father the success of his plan, but Gruffydd abated nothing of his formal courtesy and attention to the Commissioners. He sent his sons in the morning with a numerous retinue to attend them to the Guild Hall, the scene of the night's festivity, where they met the Mayor and Sheriffs of the borough. Lord Whitney chuckled at the thought of having the redoubtable Welshman so completely in his power, and summoned Gruffydd to attend. He forthwith appeared, splendidly dressed, and was immediately arrested by the officers of the Court. He made no show of resistance, but with an assumed air of great respect, requested that the proceedings against him might be conducted according to the forms of law, and that the Commission, under which he was attached, might be publicly read, alledging that he could not otherwise consider himself bound to submit to the authority of the Commissioners.

Lord Whitney readily assented to his request; but upon putting his hand into the sleeve of his cloak discovered, for the first time, the loss of his Commission. Consternation was visible on his countenance, and an enquiry was immediately whispered round amongst the Commissioners' attendants for the missing document. Gruffydd surveyed the party for some time with secret satisfaction, but in complacent silence.

‘Methinks Lord Whitney,’ he said at last, casting a scrutinizing glance upon the Commissioners, ‘if he comes here by the King’s grace, as he says, must have valued his Com-

mission too highly, lightly to have committed it to the safe keeping of that ruffle, or carelessly to have lost it. Look, my Lord, to your pyebald coat or your silk hood, you may have placed it there, perhaps, to be nearer to your memory.' Then starting with fury, clapping his hat hastily upon his head, and turning to his friends and followers—'What,' he said, 'have we cozeners and cheaters come hither to abuse the King's Majesty's power, and to disquiet his true-hearted subjects the good citizens of this our loyal town?' Looking at the Commissioners, afterward, with a bitter frown—

'By the mass,' said he, 'before the next day come to an end, I will hang up all your bodies for traitors and imposters.' And immediately ordered his men-at-arms to seize and carry them to prison.

The Commissioners were panic struck, and entreated for their lives; which Gruffydd at last granted on condition that Lord Whitney should put on his livery coat of blue, and be bound by an oath to go up to the King, acknowledge his own offences, and justify the Welshman's proceedings. The terrified Commissioner, to preserve his life, consented, and faithfully fulfilled his oath.

Gruffydd, continuing his depredations upon the Lords Marchers, was again cited before the King's Court, and on failing to attend, was convicted of felony. This determined him to break with the House of Lancaster, and to declare for the Duke of York. He joined the Earl of March, the duke's son, with eight hundred men, well armed and appointed, and was slain in the bloody field of Mortimer's Cross, after he had lived long enough to know that victory had declared on the side of the White Rose.

Gruffydd was succeeded in his power and possessions by his

eldest son Thomas, who inherited the courage of his father, but in connection with a mildness of disposition, and an elegance of manners, rarely united in those cruel times of civil warfare. To avoid intermixing in the contests of the rival houses, he withdrew to the accomplished Court of the Duke of Burgundy, in whose service he enrolled himself. Here he fell in love with the Duke's niece, and to avoid the consequence of his indiscreet attachment, he returned to his native land.

Thomas ap Gruffydd was famous for his boldness and skill in the tilt and tourney, and in single combat. After his return from Burgundy he had several encounters of this latter kind, particularly with Henry ap Gwilym, of Court Henry, in the vale of the Towey, who repeatedly challenged him, and was as constantly vanquished. A quarrel with William, the proud Earl of Pembroke, brought upon him another adversary, whose adventures are attended with some humorous circumstances, which, as they tend to illustrate the character of the times, are here related. The earl's quarrel was taken up by one Tuberville, a notable swash buckler of that day, 'one that would fight on anie slight occasion, nott much heeding the cause.' Tuberville sent his defiance to Thomas ap Gruffydd by one of the earl's retainers.

'Go, tell the knave,' said he, 'that if he will not accept my challenge, I will ferret him out of his cunnie berrie, the Castle of Abermarlais.'—Thomas received this message very jocosely. 'By my faith,' said he, 'if thy master is in such haste to be killed, I would that he should choose some other person to undertake the office of executioner.'

This reply very much provoked the challenger, and in a rage he set out for Abermarlais, and entering the gate, the

first person whom he encountered was Thomas ap Gruffydd himself, sitting at his ease, dressed in a plain grey frock gown, whom he took for the porter.

‘Tell me, fellow,’ said Tuberville, ‘is thy master Thomas ap Gruffydd within?’—‘Sir,’ answered Thomas, ‘he is at no great distance, if thou wouldst have aught with him, I will bear thy commands.’

‘Then tell him,’ said he, ‘that here is one Tuberville would fain speak with him.’ Thomas hearing his name, and observing the fury he was in, could scarcely refrain from laughing in his face. But restraining himself, he said he would acquaint his master; and on going into his room sent two or three of his servants to call him in. Tuberville no sooner saw Thomas ap Gruffydd than, without making any apology for the mistake he had committed, he taxed him roundly for his contempt to so great a person as the Earl of Pembroke.

‘In good time, Sir,’ said Thomas, ‘is not my Lord of Pembroke of sufficient courage to undertake his own quarrels without the aid of such a swasher as thyself?’—‘Yes, certainly,’ replied Tuberville, ‘but thou art too much beneath his place and dignity, and he has left thy chastisement to me.’

‘Well, then,’ said Thomas in excellent humour, ‘if thou wouldst even have it so, where would it please thee that thou shouldst have me to school?’—‘Where thou wilt, or dar’st,’ replied Tuberville.

‘Thou comest here with harsh compliments,’ observed Thomas, ‘I am not ignorant, however, that as the acceptor of thy challenge, both time, place, and weapons, are in my choice; but I ween that it is not the fashion for scholars to appoint where their masters shall correct them.’ After this par-

ley, Thomas fixed on Herefordshire as the scene of combat. Here the champions met accordingly; when, at the first pass, Thomas unhorsed his adversary, and cast him to the ground, and by the fall broke his back.

The amusement of men of gentle blood, as they were somewhat strangely called in this rude age, when not actually engaged in civil strife, seemed to be in fierce personal encounters. The next engagement of this kind was in Merionethshire, with David Gough, when Thomas ap Gruffydd killed his antagonist. Having afterwards thrown himself on the ground, without his armour, to rest himself, he was treacherously run through the body by one of his enemy's retainers.

Thomas ap Gruffydd's two elder sons, Morgan and David, became, immediately on their father's decease, warm partizans, on opposite sides, of the two rival Houses of York and Lancaster,—and both perished in that murderous warfare.

The inheritance now descended to Rhys ap Thomas, whose first act when he came into possession of the estate, was to put an end to the feuds which had subsisted between the family of Court Henry and his own, by a marriage alliance with Eva, the daughter and heiress of Henry ap Gwylym of that house. By this judicious measure, he added to his possessions a property not much inferior to his own original patrimony. His establishment and hospitality were in every respect suitable to his immense wealth, and displayed the magnificence of a prince, rather than that of a private gentleman. He acquired unbounded popularity, and by degrees very formidable power, by re-establishing the games and institutions of his country on different parts of his estates in Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, and by training the young men to the use of all

kinds of arms, under the guise of sham fights and military spectacles.

The fatal battle of Tewkesbury was fought on the third of May, 1471, and by its decisive character seemed to put an end for the present to the hopes of the House of Lancaster. Queen Margaret, whose sagacity and courage had been the guide and stay of her party, was a prisoner in the Tower, and the young Prince of Wales, her son, had been inhumanly butchered before the face of the Plantagenet King, for having given a reply worthy of the spirit and magnanimity of his mother. Twelve pitched battles had been fought during this sanguinary contest of the White and Red Roses. In these battles, and on the scaffold, above sixty princes of the Royal families, above one half of the nobles and principal gentlemen, and above one hundred thousand of the common people of England, had lost their lives. The bloody and luxurious reign of Edward IV. was terminated almost prematurely by a death brought on by dissipation and mental remorse; and that of his successor, Richard the Third, was ushered in by a tragedy of the most dismal and savage character, when the two young princes, the children of the late king, were barbarously murdered in the tower, to make way for Gloucester's unjust and violent assumption of the crown.

The defection of the Duke of Buckingham from the cause of Richard the Third had once more raised the hopes of the House of Lancaster, when it became of great consequence to gain the adherence of so powerful a chieftain as Rhys ap Thomas, especially as he held the command of the western coast of Wales and the surrounding district. The King suspicious of the fidelity of his subjects, sent his commissioners to Rhys, amongst others, to exact an oath of fidelity,

which, though somewhat offended at the jealousy manifested by Richard in its requirement, he took without hesitation.

‘I would have the King to know,’ said Rhys to the Commissioners, ‘that such suspicions on the part of princes might read to some of fickle minds and unstable thoughts evil lessons against themselves; for myself, I protest to his Majesty that whoever, ill affected to the state, shall dare to land in these parts of Wales where I have any command, must resolve with himself to make his entrance and irruption over my body.’

Not far from the little town of Llandilo Vawr, at the eastern extremity of a fine lake, stood the Abbey of Talley, a name which it derived from its locality.* Its abbot was a zealous partizan of the Earl of Richmond, and the intimate friend of Rhys. Plotting, wily, and persevering, he sought to gain him over to the cause of the Tudor, by alarming his fears at the suspicious and sanguinary character of Richard; insinuating at the same time that the visit of the Commissioners was an indication that he had already become an object of the tyrant’s jealousy and hatred. He succeeded after some time in creating distrust and apprehension in the mind of Rhys, and by the application of that subtle casuistry in which the pious churchmen of those days were eminently skilled, he silenced his scruples as to his oath and his declaration of loyalty.† The abbot avowed his attachment, and that of his neighbour, the Bishop of St. David, to the interest of the House of Lancaster, and he was not long in obtaining from Rhys assurances of support in the same cause.

* Tal y Llychau, the head of the lakes.

† A popular tradition in the neighbourhood asserts, that Rhys satisfied his conscience by remaining under a small bridge while the Earl of Richmond passed over. This was doubtless one of the expedients suggested by the worthy abbot.

It was rather more than eleven years after the decisive battle of Tewkesbury, when Henry, Earl of Richmond, afterwards Henry the Seventh of England, landed at Milford Haven, with a small band of French auxiliaries, to make a desperate and, as it should then seem, with such inadequate means, a fruitless effort to dethrone the tyrant of York, and to seize for himself the sceptre and crown of Britain. Rhys ap Thomas no sooner heard of the arrival of the French fleet in the bay than, true to his promise, he ordered the beacon fires to be lighted on all the neighbouring hills, as the pre-concerted signal of the event, and hastened himself, with a noble band of chosen followers well mounted and armed, to greet him. The rendezvous of the partizans of the House of Lancaster was at Shrewsbury, whither Rhys repaired with a select body of two thousand horse, chosen from the flower of his attendants. The armies of the contending parties marched to meet each other, and the important day was fast approaching which should lay for ever one of the contending factions in the dust. It was Sunday morning when Richard moved his long array through the streets of Leicester, to the sound of martial music, with the kingly crown upon his head, and pitched the tents of his disciplined troops, in the evening of the same day, on the field of Bosworth. Richmond was already in the field, and so nearly encamped to his enemy, that many of the disaffected in the tyrant's army came over, and joined him in the darkness of the night. At early dawn the gathering hosts had mustered at their appointed posts. The war cry of the conflicting Roses was once more raised on the peaceful plains of merry England; and a fearful contest, such as when men fight for a crown and kingdom, marked the progress of that fatal day.

Richard, in the heat of the battle, made a desperate plunge at the Earl of Richmond; Brandon, and Cheyne, and many a high-born gentleman, fell before the shock of his fierce encounter. Nothing could resist the fury of his onslaught. He had nearly reached the spot where Richmond stood, when Rhys saw the peril which the Earl's life was in, and mounting his favourite charger, Grey Fetterlocks, which he always reserved for great emergencies, with Sir William Stanley, flew to his rescue. The gallant Welshman encountered the King hand to hand, and, after a desperate struggle, slew him.*

Richmond was hailed King on the field of battle by his victorious army, and Stanley placed the crown of England on his brow. It was in the calm evening twilight of that tumultuous day when Rhys, Stanley, and the King met together in the tent of the fallen tyrant.

‘You have both done bravely, my gallant friends,’ said the King, ‘this well-fought field is yours. This day will heal, I trust, the distractions of this unhappy country. Rise, Sir Rhys ap Thomas,’ he said to the kneeling warrior, ‘the honour of knighthood is justly thine; and hereafter, in token of this day’s service, and the life that I owe to thy valour, I shall call thee Father Rhys.’ The two knights divided the spoil of the tyrant’s tent.

Sir Rhys ap Thomas maintained the fame of his high character in all the bitter conflicts of the reign of Henry the

* The Welsh traditions claim this honour for their hero, and record it as a fact. Richard, who the day before had marched out of Leicester a king, with all the attributes and pomp of royalty, was carried back a corse, silent, forlorn, stripped, and tied across a horse, behind one of his own heralds. His body, after being exposed for a few days, was buried with little ceremony in the Church of the Grey Friars of that town.

Seventh. He was created a Knight Banneret, loaded with honours, and had conferred upon him the government of Wales. He attended his sovereign in the expedition to France, and took part with the besieging army at Boulogne. When peace was concluded with Louis XI. that artful monarch sent a pension of two hundred marks to Sir Rys, as he had done to most of Henry's counsellors. Sir Rhys, considering it only in the shape of a bribe, indignantly spurned the offer. 'Tell thy master,' said he to the messenger, 'that if he intends by this to relieve my wants he has sent too little; but if he proposes to corrupt my mind or stagger my fidelity, his kingdom would not be enough.'

The reign of Henry VII., though comparatively peaceful, gave rise to two extraordinary impostures, in the pretensions of Lambert Simnel and Perkin Warbeck to the crown of England. In the severe conflicts of Stoke and Blackheath, which were the consequence, Sir Rhys bore a distinguished part. In the first, the eager valour of the Welsh hero had nearly cost him his life; for, pressing forward before his men in an encounter with one of the Irish commanders, he was beset by several of the enemy, and only rescued from destruction by the timely aid of the Earl of Shrewsbury, who flew to his assistance. After the battle the King, who had been informed of his narrow escape, addressed him jocularly—'How now, Father Rhys, how likest thou the entertainment here? Whether is it better, eating leeks in Wales, or shamrocks among the Irish?' 'Both, certainly, but coarse fare,' replied Rhys, 'yet either would seem a feast with such a companion,' pointing gratefully to the Earl who had rescued him.

In the succeeding reign of Henry the Eighth he was equally

distinguished. He possessed the Justiciaryship of the Principality, and gained great honours at the sieges of Tiruenne and Tournay, where he commanded the light horse. On his return he was invested with the office of Seneschal and Chancellor of the manors of Haverford West and Ross, in Pembroke-shire. The latter days of the old warrior were spent in the peaceful retirement of Carew Castle, amidst the mimic exhibitions of those martial spectacles whose sanguinary realities had engaged and delighted his active life, and in the pageants and festivities of St. George, the patron Saint of the order to which he belonged, which he celebrated with a splendour and magnificence that has become matter of history. In the year 1527 the veteran knight sunk to rest, and the holy fathers of the Priory of Carmarthen chaunted '*requiescat in pace*' over the mortal remains of

Sir Rhys ap Thomas.

CHAPTER XV.

PEMBRE HILL—LLANELLY—SWANSEA—NEATH—MARGAM—BRIDGEND—COWBRIDGE
—LLANDAFF—CAERPHILLY.

I LOOKED on the mountains—a vapour lay
Folding their heights in its dark array;
Thou brakest forth—and the mist became
A crown and a mantle of living flame.

Hemans.

THE heavy mists were still lingering over the stream of the Gwendraeth when I took up my light scrip, such as becomes a wanderer whose way is over hill and valley, and whose lodging place is oftentimes the way-side hostelrie, and departed from Kidwelly over the dreary swamp that intersects that little town and the elevated district of Pembre Hill, the highest mountain range in the south of Carmarthenshire. Having crossed Spudder Bridge, and ascended the hill immediately beyond it, I stood for a while upon its summit to contemplate a scene the most expansive and enchanting that could fall within the range of the human vision. The thick vapours had rolled away from mountain, dale, and river, and the bright rays of a morning sun had lighted up every object of interest far and near. I stood amidst this splendid

array of Nature under the influence of strong emotion and deeply-excited and devout feeling.

‘These are *thy* glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty, thine this universal frame.’

On one side stretched Carmarthen Bay, glittering in radiant sunshine, with the distant points of Caldy Island and Giltar Head, and farther out the wide expanse of the Bristol Channel; on the south, the bluff coast of Devon and Somerset, forming the extreme line of the horizon, and looking over the peninsula of Gowerland and the Bay of Swansea. Such was the scene; and it was with a sigh that I turned away to descend the romantic pass that conducts to Llanelly. I know not how it is, and it does not enter into the philosophy of a wanderer upon the earth’s surface, like myself, to explain it, but I always feel the current of pleasant thought repulsed when I turn from the delightful survey of that which is grand and beautiful in nature, to the contemplation of scenes in which the strength and ingenuity of man is taxed and wasted for the acquisition of sordid gain, and that, too, it may be, amidst the poisonous exhalations of the mine, or the no less injurious vapours of the heated furnace; and so it was in this case. I slowly and lingeringly withdrew from the enchantments of Pembre Hill, and threaded my way through the dirty streets of Llanelly, amidst the smoke of coal pits and smelting houses that almost darkened the air. I stopt not to examine the miserable ruins of its castle, or the embattled tower and tapering spire that at once arise from its single church, or the traces that are still left to identify it as the ancient Roman Station of Leucarium; but pursued my way across the ferry of the Loughor, that here empties itself into the Burry Creek, till I reached, in somewhat of a fretful and

melancholy mood, the busy port of Swansea, that stands in the dip of its beautiful bay.

Swansea, or, as it was anciently called, Abertawe, from the junction of the Tawe with the sea, stands on the western side of that river, which is here navigable for ships of large burden. The bay may be said to rival that of Naples, from its beautiful undulating line and capacious basin; and the town is seen to great advantage from it. The castle asserts its existence by one solitary quadrangular tower, with its range of light circular arches surrounding the top, peering from the mass of houses that have choked it up nearly on all sides. It has also the remains of its eastern wing, part of which is in desolation, and part advantageously converted into excellent shops and respectable domestic habitations. This castle was built by the Norman leader, Henry Beaumont, Earl of Warwick, the conqueror of Gowerland. Swansea, or its immediate district, is *supposed* to have given birth to Gower, one of the fathers of British poetry, and the cotemporary of Chaucer, in the rudest ages of its literary history; but it was *actually* the birth place of Nash, better known as Beau Nash, so long the *arbiter elegantiarum* of Bath. It was also the place of banishment of the unfortunate and wayward poet, Savage.

The sweep of Swansea Bay comprehends many objects of great interest. In an angle formed by the indention of its bending shore, about five miles from the town, stands the remains of Oystermouth Castle. This fortress occupies a gentle eminence close to the shore, and belonged from a remote period to the Lords of Gower. Its walls are still nearly entire. In the hour of its pride it has frowned defiance upon many hostile hosts that have successively unfurled their banners before it. To add to its strength and importance, tradi-

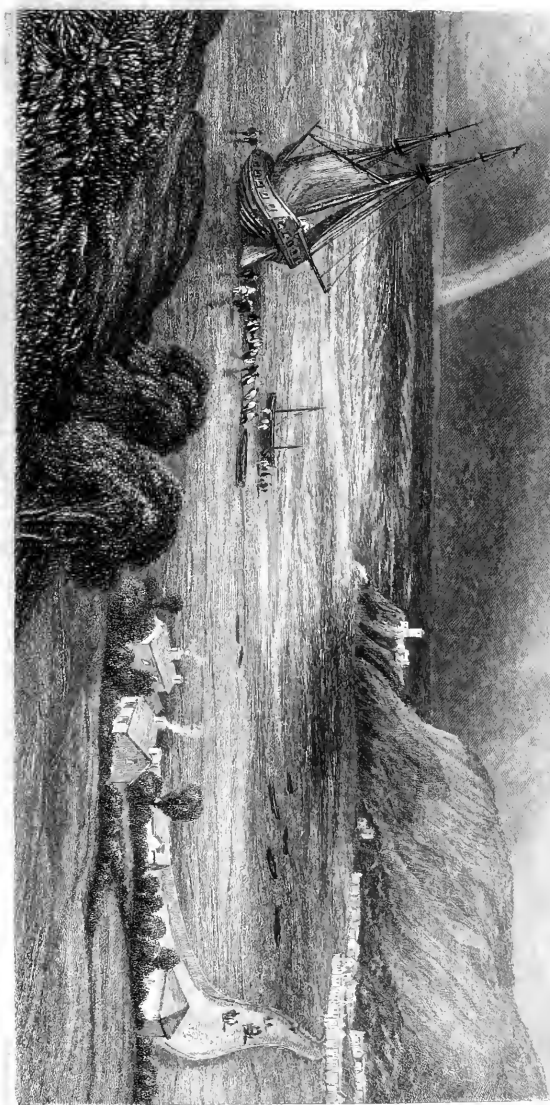
tion relates that a subterraneous communication was made between this castle and that of Swansea. Its bold and majestic ruins are now seen by the far-off mariner from his little skiff on the waters.

The pleasant village of the same name spreads its scattered habitations on the declivity of the hilly range near which the castle stands, under the shadow of a limestone rock, and reaches to the dry and somewhat elevated part of the beech within the Mumble's Point. This latter object is a bold rocky projection, running some distance into the sea, and bears the Pharos of that part of our island coast which is washed by the waters of the Bristol Channel. Its dazzling light can be seen at a great distance by the mariner, and has been his guide and beacon on many a dark and stormy night. There is something more than ordinarily interesting in this object of man's creation, and as the Wanderer's eye took in its towering height, he contemplated it as a grateful illustration of the intelligence and benevolence of his race. There it stood, with its firm foot on the rock, unshaken amidst the wildest blast, and throwing its light upon the trackless waves, when the heavens themselves were covered with blackness,—seeming like the Genius of Mercy, sending her voice booming upon the waters, to warn the wayfarer from the perils of the coast.

At a short distance from this place are the weather-beaten ruins of Pennarth Castle, standing on a rocky cliff, at the extremity of a barren sandy heath, and still farther on, to the northward, those of Penrice. In the same direction, and far beyond these ruins, rises the high mountain of Cefn Bryn,*

* In English, the Hill of Sketty.







with its immense cromlech called Arthur's Stone, and a little below what remains of the castellated mansion of Oxwich, built on the shore of the small bay of that name, about the middle of the sixteenth century. The view is terminated by the promontory of Wormshead and Llanmadoc Hill, on which in centuries past the Roman sentinel held his watch, and of whose encampment Time has not yet destroyed all the traces.

But the Wanderer's way held not to these places. Leaving Swansea and Gowerland, which forms this interesting peninsula, on the west, his path stretched towards the east, in a direction nearly parallel with the coast, describing something like a half circle from Neath to Caerphilly, and including within these points many subjects of great natural beauty, the ruins of many ancient fortresses and the convenient towns of Bridgend, Cowbridge, Cardiff, and Llandaff.

The little borough of Neath offers but few attractions to detain the foot of the traveller. The river bearing the same name is here crossed by a stone bridge, which marks the boundary of Gowerland. This stream, in its passage from the romantic region amidst the Brecknock hills in which it takes its rise, flows through one of the most picturesque valleys in South Wales, and, after being swollen by the Dulas and other tributary waters, empties itself into the Bay of Swansea. The ruins of the abbey, at a little distance from the place, and of the castle, are inconsiderable, and too much disfigured by the dense atmosphere to invite attention. The former, however, possesses some historical interest, from having been the sanctuary of Edward the Second, when pursued by his cruel consort, Isabella, and her confederates, which delayed for a while the fatal catastrophe that awaited the fallen monarch within the gloomy dungeons of Berkeley Castle.

Emerging from the cloudy canopy that seems to cover Neath, I pursued my route by Eagle's Bush, an agreeable situation upon some high ground near the road, to Britton Ferry, a place of rare beauty, close by the estuary of the Neath. The river here rolls in rapid current along its ample channel, by the western boundary of the ornamented grounds, as if in haste to mingle itself with the waters of the bay. The summits of the rocky shore which fronts the sea, are clothed with forests of fine oak and other trees, and the line of verdant beauty descends gradually and gracefully to the river's brink, shutting in the fairy region from the rough blasts that sweep across the Bristol Channel. The varied nature of the grounds, now elevated into swelling hills, now gently subsiding into rich and fertile valleys, interspersed with gay flowering knolls of myrtle and magnolia, which the mildness of the climate permits to grow in the open air, with the perpetual change which masses of thick umbrageous trees, secluded dingles, and open meadows afford, render this a scene of perfect enchantment. The village churchyard close at hand, that peaceful resting place, combines its picturesque effect and its soothing melancholy reflections to unite sentiment with scenery, and to render the landscape complete, by mingling the heart's finest emotions with Nature's choicest, dearest beauties.

I constrained myself to leave this attractive place; for the lengthening shadows reminded me that I had yet to pass some distance before the pilgrimage of the day was ended. I lingered, however, on the road, about the delightful retreat of Baglan, where the poet Mason composed his celebrated Elegy on the death of Lady Coventry. Would the reader know what detained the foot of the Wanderer in this fascinating spot, gazing fixedly, as if buried in some abstract speculation,

though the twilight shades of the evening were warning him, by their deepening hues, of the coming darkness? His mind had caught the thread of long-lost recollections. It had conjured up the gentle form of that Gleaner* among many lands, whose rich voice and tender tones he had heard in by-gone days giving a melancholy and thrilling emphasis to those thought-creating lines—

‘ Yes, Coventry is dead ! Attend the strain,
Daughters of Albion ! ye that, light as air,
So oft have tript in her fantastic train,
With hearts as gay, and faces half as fair.’

Leaving Baglan with all its associations, I hastened my steps as rapidly as possible through the dirty village of Aberavon,† in no mood to examine the fragments that yet remain of its fallen castle, or to pay any respect to the portly representative of its corporate honours, and while the last rays of the great luminary still lingered on the edge of the magnificent hills that formed the back ground of Margam Park, I entered that quiet village, and took up my abode at the little inn that hangs out its invitation to the weary traveller.

Nothing can exceed the rural beauty of the modest hamlet of Margam with its peaceful sanctuary, occupying, as it does, the green valley at the base of the majestic mountain steep of Mynydd Mawr, clothed with verdant oaks to its very summit, and breasting the wild waves that sweep along the Bristol Channel. To the left of the village, and at a very short distance from it, spread the grounds and gardens of Margam

* Mr. Pratt, author of *Gleanings through Westphalia, Holland and Wales*, and many excellent Poems.

† Aberavon is a borough and governed by an annually elected Portrieve.

Park, sharing alike the seclusion of the valley, and the shelter of the same lofty range of waving woods. This place boasts one of the finest greenhouses in the kingdom, which contains the splendid collection of orange and lemon trees brought from Italy, by Sir Henry Wootton, as a present to King Charles I. The vessel in which it was freighted was wrecked on this estate nearly two centuries ago, and the plants were preserved to be restored to the Royal owner, but the troubles of that period prevented this from being done, and they were afterwards confirmed to the present possessor by Queen Anne. At either end of the building are two superb saloons in which are placed several rare specimens of antiquity, some splendid vases, and precious subjects of sculpture and statuary. I turned from this magnificent orangery, glowing with yellow fruit, and filled with an atmosphere of perfume, to ruminate amongst the remains of the celebrated Abbey which the park encloses. Nearly seven centuries have rolled away since it was first erected, by Robert, Earl of Gloucester, for the Cistercian Brotherhood. Traces of its ancient foundation have been discovered, which display the extent and magnificence of the building. The elegant Chapter House, with its fine proportions, and central clustered columns sustaining its vaulted roof, has been the last to fall beneath the ravages of time. All is now in complete ruin, and the gigantic remains that lie prostrate here and there, are over-topped by the long grass, while the gay valerian and snapdragon unite their red and violet tints, with many coloured wild flowers, as if in triumph over the cloistered walls and mural fragments of the ancient Abbey of Margam. I now followed the umber line of the sylvan path that leads through the overhanging woods to the mountain top, to survey the manifold beauties that spread on

all sides in the valley beneath ; while the vestiges of the little oratory on the hill, the convent of Eglwys Nunydd, that once shared the companionship of the Abbey, but now transformed into a respectable farm house, with the mouldering antiquities, monastic and Roman, scattered plentifully around this district, engaged with peculiar interest all my antiquarian lore. The present parish church, which formed part of the ancient monastic building attached to the abbey, contains many monumental figures and tombs, very striking in their effect, and deeply interesting, as connected with ages long since departed.

I left Margam reposing, as it has done for generations past, under the shadow of its own wood-crowned hill, and directed my steps towards Bridgend, which I intended to make my resting place for the night. My road lay through the little village of Pyle, and by the excellent Inn of that place. On my left rose the mountain ridges of Mynydd Blyden, and on my right, Kenfig, with its singular geologic Lake of pure fresh water, its sandy desert Heath, and its Castle ruins, and beyond the ever-rolling waters of the deep blue sea.

Branching off from the main road I entered the little straggling town of Bridgend, which spreads itself on either side of the Ogmore. Its separate townships, known by the names of the old and new Castle, are almost the only records of the existence of the two fortresses that once belonged to this place. These had their reference to a former age, and both the mural structures and their memorials have perished. But Bridgend and its vicinity possess an interest in being the birth place of two eminently literary and excellent men, Dr. Price and Mr. Morgan, whose fame does not rest upon such frail materials. The virtue and simplicity of the former is

portrayed under Mrs. Chapone's well-known character of *Simplicius*; but his fame is more honourably connected with his literary efforts in the cause of civil and religious liberty—statistics—financial economy*—natural and moral philosophy—and theology. The latter was the nephew and colleague of Dr. Price in the Dissenters' academy, at Hackney. He was the author of several works on natural philosophy, remarkable for their boldness and originality, and was in private life, like his relative, both honoured and beloved by a numerous circle of friends.

The sun had long passed his meridian, when I left Bridgend to visit Ewenny Priory and Church. The remains of the former stand in a meadow bordering the narrow stream of the same name, which empties itself into the Ogmores, a little farther on. Ewenny Priory has still its strong embattled walls and towers, or, at least, such remains of them as give some idea of their former massiveness, and plainly indicate that they were not meant only to afford seclusion to their devout inmates, but security, also, in days of lawless violence and strife. Seen, as they were, amidst the surrounding and intermingling trees, with a fine western sun gleaming through them, they formed together beautiful subjects of light and shade; the sombre grey walls finely contrasting with the pale green leaves, and these latter flickering in the gentle breeze, turning aside the level beams of pleasant sunshine, or breaking their straight lines into a thousand fragments of light.

* When Mr. Pitt was about to bring in a Bill to provide for the payment of the National Debt, he applied to Dr. Price for his advice. The Doctor furnished him with three plans, one of which he adopted, and proposed to the House of Commons *as his own*, without the slightest acknowledgment of his obligation to its real author.

The hall is nearly entire, and the whole of the ruins form the best specimen of the ancient monastic style that are to be met with in the Principality. The church, which has remained almost unaltered since the days of Giraldus, and which is still used as a place of religious worship, is cruciform in its shape, and its heavy circular arches resting on thick, bulky, clustered columns with plain capitals, proclaim its early Norman architecture and high antiquity. It has many monuments and rudely-sculptured effigies, with still ruder and imperfect devices and inscriptions; but all tending to shew its existence in the times of the first Norman adventurers. I lingered till evening twilight amidst these shades of bye-gone days; and nightfall had nearly surprised me among their crumbling ruins. As I turned away from these ancient piles,—the church which was still the house of prayer, and the ruins which once formed the sanctuary of the holy brotherhood of St. Benedict,—and emerged again into the open road, it seemed as if the spell, which had long held me in communion with the spirits of departed ages, was broken; and I hurried on to mingle again with my living fellows, and to seek, in the quiet hostelry of the little town at hand, the rest which a day of travel and research had prepared me to enjoy.

With the early dawn on the following morning I was upon the road for Cowbridge, through a district rich in interest to the naturalist and antiquary. Receding to the north-east in its hilly retreat, and dimly seen amongst the intermingling trees, stands the village of Coity, with its extensive and interesting castle remains, and historical associations. On my right and left, at varied distances, were the ruins of many ancient fortresses, Norman and British, relieved by some elegant mansions of modern erection, smiling in their freshness and youth.

Among the latter is Dunraven Castle, on the rocky promontory of the sea shore, occupying the site of the ancient structure, whose dark ruins have given place to a new and cheerful building of pointed architecture. There is a dismal story connected with the former edifice, which, after having lived through the most hostile periods of British history, fell by succession into the hands of the last of the Vaughans. When the storm raged on that coast, this unprincipled wretch used to put up false lights, and adopted other devices to deceive and mislead the mariner, that he might reap the harvest of a wreck upon his inhospitable manor. His crime was distinctly marked by heaven in its punishment. His three sons were all drowned. Two of them perished on a lone rock in the sea before his eyes. This fatal catastrophe rendered the place hateful to him, and he hastily sold his possession, and left it for ever.

Farther on are the remains of St. Donatt's Castle, surrounded by ancient woods, which prevent them from being seen except from the high grounds in the immediate neighbourhood. St. Donatt's had its towers and bastions, and curtained walls of sufficient strength and proportion, as its massive fragments attest, to maintain its importance and value in a land wrested from the hands of its ancient possessors, and filled with the violence of arbitrary and lawless power, and rife in insurrection and perpetual civil contest. But the lords of St. Donatt's combined the luxury with the fiercer passions of that rude age. The castle had its terraced gardens, reaching from the walls to the shore of the British Channel, and its broad avenues, in which the rich shade of the clustering oaks singularly, but not ungracefully, combined with the fanciful, half-military, architecture

that prevailed in those times. It was this peculiar style which preserved such a dignified and feudal air throughout the grounds devoted to ornament and pleasure in the domains of our ancestral nobility. The generation and its fashions have, however, passed away for ever. Still farther on the road is the site of St. Quintin's Castle, a name once formidable amongst the Norman adventurers that overran this part of the Principality; what remains of the building is now converted into the humble but useful purpose of a barn.

Cowbridge is a town of little importance in itself, and is intersected by a small river running directly through it, which, at a short distance, falls into the sea. Robert de Quintin, one of the companions in arms of the Norman adventurer Fitzhammon, surrounded this town with a stone wall. A bold Gothic gate on the south, in tolerable condition, still remains to attest the truth of this fact. I entered Cowbridge as the good housewife began to ply her daily task, and, after refreshing myself with an excellent Welsh breakfast, prepared to pursue my way to Cardiff and Llandaff. On the left of the little town, and overlooking the rich fertile vale of Cowbridge, stands Penline Castle, boldly seated on the lofty summit of a mountainous ridge that comprehends in its crescent the two extremities of Tre-fychan and Coed y Stanby, and commanding a prospect of uncommon diversity and extent. Beneath lie, stretched as on a map, the luxuriant lowlands in all their picturesque variety of shade and colour, of green meadows and fields of ruddy brown, bounded by the distant hills of Trebellin and Coed y Brain; and far off, at the extremity of vision, the magnificent mountains that rise in the very heart of the wildest region of Glamorganshire: on the south, the shining waters of the Bristol Channel, to the iron-bound coast of Ilfracombe and Somersetshire.

Cardiff, a name which it derives from its situation on the Taff, was in ancient times alternately under the British, Roman, and Norman sway, and was then as now a place of considerable importance. It possessed a fortified Castle, which was surrounded with embattled walls, having five gates of entrance, of which there are still some remains. It owes its erection to Fitzhammon, after he and his adventurous knights had conquered the county of Glamorgan in the twelfth century. It was the scene of that tragical story which is related of Robert, the eldest son of the Norman Conqueror of England, who was cheated alike by his two younger brothers, Rufus and Henry, of his crown and kingdom, and by the latter deprived of his sight, and barbarously immured in one of the dismal dungeons of this place. In the time of the civil wars of Charles the First, it was besieged by Cromwell, and bravely defended by the Royalist garrison. It fell at last by treachery into the hands of the Parliamentary forces. A deserter from the fortress, acquainted with a secret subterraneous pass that led immediately underneath the river into the open country,—and which, as was usual with the fortresses of that age, had been formed for the purpose of introducing supplies into the garrison,—silently guided a strong party of the besieging army, in the dead of the night, into the castle, who surprised and overpowered its gallant defenders. Cromwell, with his accustomed decision, after he had taken possession of the place, hanged the traitor, as an example to his own troops. The western wing still preserves its ancient baronial splendour, and contains a suit of magnificent apartments; but the rest of the building has been somewhat injudiciously repaired and modernized. The court yards, with their surrounding walls, have disappeared, and in their open area have left the vener-

able keep, surmounting the elevated part of a smooth and verdant lawn, still standing like the hoary sentinel of the place, the time-worn witness of its eventful, melancholy history—of its ancient strength and its strange vicissitudes. The mount from which the keep rises is of considerable height and breadth. I ascended to the summit by the winding path with which it is encircled, to enjoy the beautiful prospect of the surrounding country it affords, but principally to obtain a view of the picturesque ruins of Castell Coch, or the Red Castle, as it is termed in English, that rest on the top of a precipitous cliff, towards which converge the mountains that rise on each side of the Taff, leaving only a narrow pass that was effectually commanded by it. Castle Coch might be said almost to shut in the two valleys to the north and south, through which the river runs, and was, from its situation and strength, nearly impregnable. Its short history would carry back the reader to the twelfth century, in which its bristling ramparts were the last refuge of the liberties of Glamorganshire. Ivor, the son of Ceidivor, better known as Ivor Bach, or ‘the Little,’ from the smallness of his stature, erected this castle, and assembled the bold and discontented spirits of his country, when their privileges and possessions had been invaded by the Norman knights, in the reign of William Rufus, and afterwards in that of his brother Henry. It was in this latter reign that the hero of the Red Castle on the Cliff made a daring and unexpected attack upon that of Cardiff, and took its commander, Robert Duke of Gloucester, the King’s son, prisoner, together with his wife, and carried them with him to his eyrie in the mountains. The liberties and immunities of the country were ceded as the price of the freedom of the noble captives, nor were they released till these had been

confirmed by the King's own hand. The antiquarian interest of Cardiff is confined to a few objects, amongst which is the fine church of St. John, of rich Norman architecture, and the trifling monastic remains of the Black and Grey Friars, founded by the descendants of the Conqueror. Cardiff has now become a place of constant visit to tourists in search of natural beauty, from its interesting local situation, and it is rising in commercial importance, owing to its connection with the mining, iron, and tin trades in the neighbourhood.

I had intended to have taken Llandaff into my day's wanderings, but I had lingered too long in the castle grounds amongst its many interesting objects, and on the ramparts, which are now tastefully planted with shrubs and laid out in walks, contemplating the beautiful scenery of the surrounding country which they afford, that I was too wearied to proceed further; and I rested for the night in one of the excellent inns which this town possesses.

A morning's walk to the ancient city of Llandaff, distant from Cardiff rather more than two miles, was only a timely preparation to a hearty breakfast which the little hostelry of the place amply provided for me. The gentle reader will, perhaps, be surprised at this singular association of terms, which convey at the same time the idea of metropolitan consequence with village humility; but the bishop's see has dwindled into an inconsiderable dependency upon its more youthful and vigorous neighbour, from whose markets its weekly supplies are derived.

Llandaff derives its name from the situation of the Church on the banks of the Taff. However this place may have declined in social importance, it has that within it which fails not to detain the foot of the traveller and the antiquary. Its

cathedral, which is the great object of attraction, boasts of a date beyond that of the renowned King Arthur. Llandaff was almost the birth-place of British Christianity, and, so far back as the second century it beheld a Christian church rise upon the banks of its own clear placid river. In the early part of the sixth century it became a bishop's see.

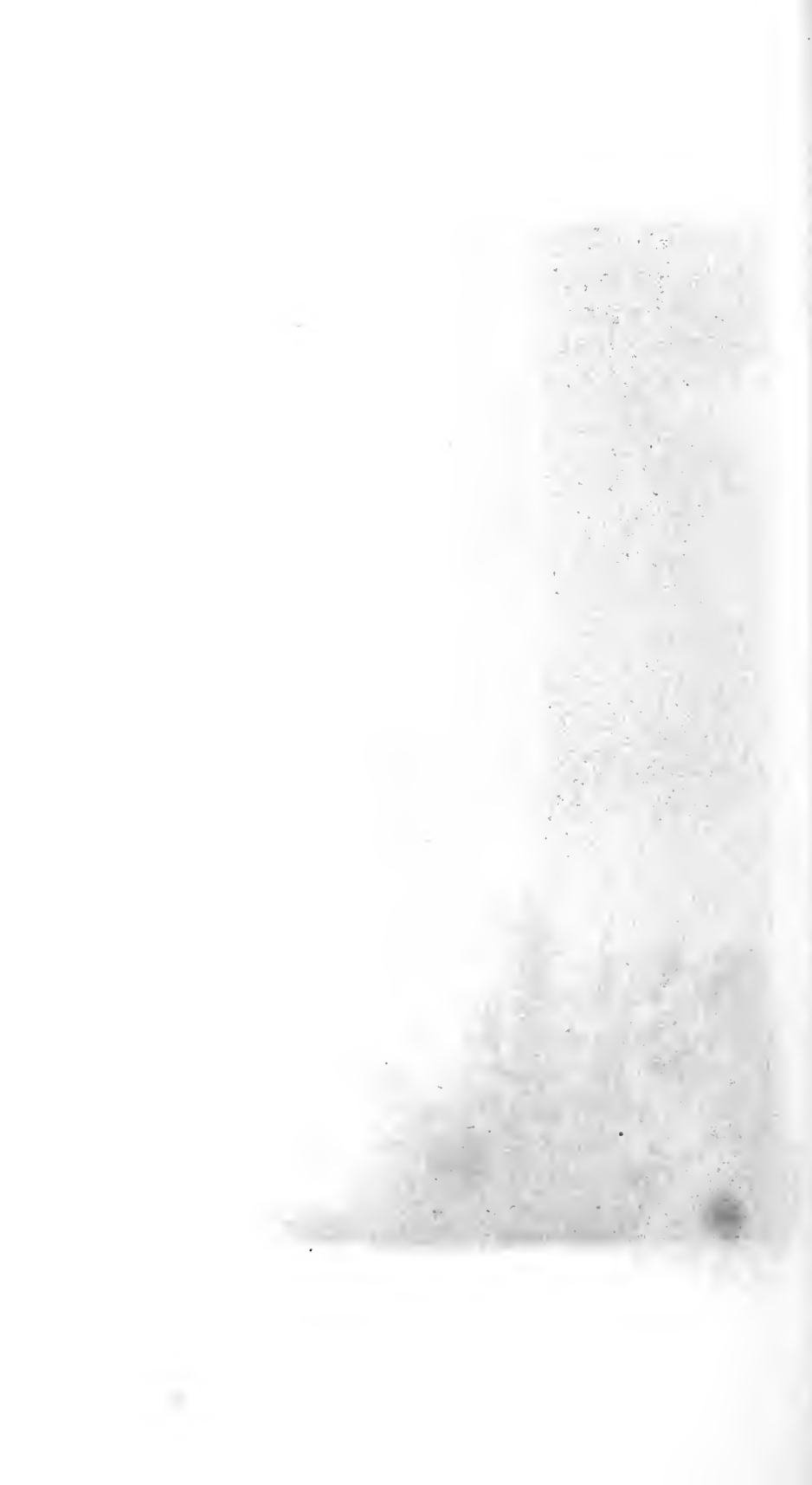
The present cathedral was erected in the twelfth century, by Bishop Urban, in a hollow surrounded by rising grounds, which gives it a solemn and monastic air. Its western front combines one of the finest specimens of the Norman, Saxon, and Gothic styles. It has a lofty square tower, profusely enriched with the best sculpture of the age in which it was built. On account of the dilapidations of the ancient chancel, some alterations took place, not in keeping with the fine architectural character of the original building. The cathedral contains some fine monuments of mitred bishops in their sacerdotal robes—of mailed warriors—and of virgins that have died of disappointed love; it also records a long array of bishops, two at least of whom may be said to be illustrious—William Morgan, the first translator of the Old Testament into the Welsh language, and Richard Watson, distinguished for his erudition as a scholar, and for his eloquent advocacy of liberal political principles in the senate. Near the cathedral are some remains of the castellated palace of the bishop, which the wild Glendower is said to have destroyed during his ineffectual struggles for the liberties of his country.

The evidences of departed men and ages which monumental records and architectural remains afford, have a natural tendency deeply to imbue the mind with solemn thought. It was in a mood of this kind, and absorbed in the reflections which it associated, that I found myself advanced some few

miles on the road to Caerphilly. When I arose in the morning I had reckoned upon a day of high gratification, such as is best felt when the attributes of the mind, the emotions of the heart, and the external objects of sense are brought into intimate and cordial association. There was Llandaff, with its wonderful history, through nearly seventeen centuries, to commence the procession of the day's events—there was a pilgrimage of short and easy performance over a mountainous region of wild and picturesque scenery upon which I had entered—and, finally, there was the termination of the diurnal stage, amongst the gigantic ruins Caerphilly Castle, now appearing in the distance before me, as I trod the almost pathless summit of Carreg Craig.

The sun's broad rays were gleaming upon this ancient pile as I entered the castle enclosure, on the eastward, by the barbican, from which stretched, in a line with the boundary wall to the right, a range of building which had been used as a barracks of the garrison. I passed through the grand gateway with its two towers into the ample court yard, on the south side of which once stood in its glory the great hall of the castle. This magnificent apartment was of extraordinary dimensions, and was ornamented in the most elaborate architectural taste of the times. It had its four grand windows with pointed arches, ornamented with double rows of sculptured leaves and fruit. The side walls were decorated with clusters of round triplet pilasters, terminated at the bottom with carved heads of exquisite and fanciful workmanship. At the east end were two doors of the same pointed character, and between them a large arched window with delicate tracery and highly finished carvings. Another apartment to the west corresponded with the great hall, but of smaller dimensions, and a









third in continuation, which formed the anteroom at the head of the great staircase. The central buildings sustained at their south-east angle a round tower, which was used as the mint, and close by it another of considerable height, which from some failure in the foundation or some other cause, has subsided into a leaning position, and has been retained for centuries in this condition by the strength of the cement which holds its masonry together—a long gallery connected the chambers with this part of the building. A lofty wall stretched its strong buttressed line all round, like a rampart of prodigious thickness, and of such extent as to enclose a large open space of ground, through which ran a copious stream that supplied the garrison with water. This great outer wall was fortified with massy square towers, at convenient distances, which communicated with each other by embattled galleries, and the whole strengthened by extensive outworks of bastions, moats, and other defences. Even now, though ages have rolled away since the period when Caerphilly Castle was the scene of social habitation or of fierce contention, yet are its remains more entire in their connections, and more prodigious in their extent, than any that belong to the history of former times in Great Britain.

A peaceful monastery, belonging to the piety of the ninth century, and named after its founder, St. Cenydd, first occupied the site of Caerphilly Castle. An irruption of the Mercian Saxons occasioned its destruction, and the first castle that was erected on its foundation was rased to the ground by Rhys Vechan, Prince of South Wales, in the thirteenth century. In a few years afterwards it was rebuilt and fortified by the Norman, John de Bruse. In the lapse of time it fell into the possession of the younger Spenser, the

worthless favorite of Edward the Second, who greatly enlarged and strengthened it. During this reign it was the refuge of this weak Monarch, when pursued by his Queen Isabella and his rebellious barons, and stood a siege of the most desperate and obstinate nature. The means by which it was taken, and the adventures of the unfortunate monarch, as related by tradition, throw an air of interest and marvel over this part of its history. A battering ram of huge dimensions, suspended upon a frame supported by twenty large oaks, and worked by a thousand men was the engine by which, in the dead of the night, a practical breach was effected in the walls. Tremendous large fires, which it took a hundred teams to supply, were kept up to assist the besiegers in working this enormous engine. After the breach was made, the King escaped in the habit of a peasant, and to disguise himself more effectually, as well as to cut off the traces of his retreat, he assisted for some time, with great apparent zeal, in piling fuel upon the surrounding fires. He soon secretly withdrew from this employment, and in the midst of the dark and stormy night pursued his way, and wandered on for twenty miles westward, through one of the mountainous outlets, without knowing the direction which he was taking, till he came to the parish of Langonoyd. In the morning he hired himself as a cowherd or shepherd, at a farm that to this day is known by the tradition connected with it. After remaining there for some time, the farmer finding him an awkward and ignorant fellow, and that he could make nothing of his services, dismissed him. From Langonoyd the unfortunate monarch found his way to the sanctuary of Neath Abbey. The castle continued to remain in the possession of the family of the Spencers, but it had been so much injured by the many fierce attacks it had

endured, that it was abandoned as a residence about the middle of the fourteenth century.

Owen Glendower took possession of it during the time of his contest for the sovereignty of Wales, and it is described even then, in its dilapidated state, as

‘ Gigantic Caerphilly, a fortress great in ruins.’

The lords of Glamorgan, during their occupation of the castle and its territory, had greatly oppressed and plundered the people; on this account the Spencers were the objects of universal execration, and the black ruins of the castle in the mountain valley of Caerphilly shared at once, with their former possessors, the deep-rooted hatred and superstitious dread of the people. The distinguished Welsh bard David ap Gwilym, in concluding one of his poems by a reference to this detested family, says,

‘ ————— He, our enemy ! may he become
A dead carcase ! his soul, may his dog run away with it ;
And may his body go to Caerphilly.’

CHAPTER XVI.

PONT Y PRVDD—YSTRAD-Y-FODWG—PONT NEATH VAUGHAN—YSTRADFELLTE.

METHINKS some musing Wanderer I see,
Weaving his wayward fancies. Round him, rock
And cliff, whose grey trees mutter to the wind,
And streams down rushing with a torrent ire :
The sky seems craggy, with her cloud-piles hung,
Deep-mass'd, as though embodied thunder lay
And darken'd in a dream of havoc there.

R. Montgomery.

THERE are few regions on earth that present more of the sublime and beautiful features of Nature, within the same compass, than are to be found among the mountains, hills, and valleys of the north of Glamorganshire.

The Taff, which rises in Brecknockshire, is an inconsiderable river till it enters the boundary of this picturesque county, and receives in succession several large streams. Its capacious channel lies deep within the mountainous ridges that intersect the county, and which shape its sinuous course in the most fantastic manner, creating as it flows rich and fertile valleys that seem to laugh with joy beside its fertilizing waters. At times, when some interposing





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rock obstructs its progress, or confines it within a narrower compass, it frets and foams like a wrathful torrent; and then, again, when it escapes into a broader sweep, it rolls with a deep and placid tide till it washes the sides of that proud cathedral which rears its towers near the end of its course, and, at length, it buries itself in the undistinguished waters of the ocean at the bay of Cardiff.

It was now approaching that time of the year when the rich and mellow Autumn was beginning to give indications of its proximity to a season of sterner and ruder character. I left Caerphilly sleeping beneath its mountain guards to the north and south, and passed through the gorge of the valley by the eastern outlet, ascending the side of the river towards Pont y Prydd, or, as it is more modernly denominated, New Bridge. The wind, as it swept through the opening in fitful gusts, plainly portended that I should experience a day of change. I wrapt my travelling cloak closer round me, prepared for whatever storms I might have to encounter, and reached the object of my search just as the careering clouds opened out to a beam of light brighter than the day had hitherto afforded. Pont y Prydd is sometimes, and very truly, rendered in English, the ‘Bridge of Beauty.’ It stretches its magnificent chord of one hundred and forty feet across the bed of the Taff, rising like a rainbow from the steep bank on the eastern side of the river, and gracefully resting on the western—the *beau ideal* of architectural elegance.

I left the contemplation of this wonder of the Principality, as it has been called, to visit the singular and picturesque waterfall about half a mile from Pont y Prydd; following a delightful little path shadowed by trees, formed underneath the jutting brow of Craig-yr-esg, which leads to it. The fall

is not more than from eight to ten feet; but the craggy strata, over which it breaks, divide the stream into several volumes, which dash with considerable violence over the opposing barrier. The white foam and spray raised by the fall beautifully harmonize with the mingled verdure that lines the dark banks of the river. From Pont y Prydd I turned my steps towards Pont Neath Vaughan, following the mountainous track to the westward, in preference to the main road through Aberdare, pursuing for a while the course of the Rhondda, which on one side forms a narrow vale, consisting merely of the road and a few fields, and on the other is bounded by perpendicular cliffs to the water's edge, surmounted at the top with the most majestic timber of the county.

At a short distance is the first waterfall on the Rhondda, which, though not so magnificent as some in the northern part of the Principality, possesses a peculiar charm in the undisturbed solitude that reigns around, broken only by the hoarse and ceaseless roar of the cataract, which, mingling with no living sound, imparts a reality to the loneliness which is intuitively perceived and sensibly felt. Further on is a second waterfall, and not more than a quarter of a mile from this is a third; but they are both distinguished by natural characteristics in a great degree corresponding with the first, except in the increased grandeur of the latter, arising from its depth and greater volume of water. The course of the river is one of great beauty and variety: its stream is sometimes disturbed by rocks and inequalities at the bottom of the channel, and its waters are fretful, foamy, and turbulent; at others it is clear, placid, transparent, and deep. The rocky shore is for the most part either precipitously steep, or shelved, or broken and worn into fantastic shapes and forms, and occasionally the

banks on either side are lined with luxuriant oaks, that throw their branches midway in the stream. Not far from the last fall is the junction of the Rhondda-vawr and the Rhondda-fychan, where a bridge spans the opposite bank. I now bent my steps up a steep and barren hill, and then continued my way at the foot of a high and rocky ridge, thrown into a variety of singular shapes. I had now entered fairly into this wild and mountainous region, where Nature seemed to reign in stern and unbroken silence amidst her own eternal rocks. Not a human being beside myself appeared to be treading these solitudes, nor was there a habitation to be seen. On my left rose into gigantic stature the stupendous summits of Mynydd Cymmer and Mynydd Dinas, and receding from them more easterly, the lofty ridge of Mynydd Glyn; on my right towered Cefn Rhondda and Cefn Gwingel, two elevated ranges of a still more magnificent character, embracing within their enclosure the stream of the lesser Rhondda, as it pursues its babbling course amidst the green forests that line its banks to its confluence with the Rhondda-vawr. Before me was Ystrad-y-fodwg,—the village of the green valley, encircled with rocks.

The road now descended the hill, and brought me again into connection with the Rhondda-vawr, which I crossed by the bridge that has been erected on this spot. I had for some time lost sight of the Rhondda, while I was exploring my path amongst a labyrinth of rocks, but the river had found a humbler channel, through which it had made its way till we met again (not without pleasure on my part) at the bottom of the hill I had just descended. Here it escapes from the frowning cliffs and rocky towers that have for so considerable a part of its course traced their images in its clear, transparent

stream while it fertilizes the Vale of Ystrad-y-fodwg, giving richness and verdure up to the very feet of those majestic mountains that embrace it. In these unfrequented regions, and especially after a fatiguing walk with but a scantily supplied scrip, the sight of a way-side inn, even such as Ystrad-y-fodwg affords, is a subject of gratulation and delight, and I was not slow to enjoy its entertainments.

Several small rippling streams now descend from the mountains and form their junction with the river; the vale becomes less fertile, and more closely embraced by the surrounding rocks, whose sides are, however, richly adorned with wood. Further on is a waterfall of great natural beauty, when seen in connection with the surrounding objects, though in itself but a miniature representation of the magnificence of many larger ones. From this point the Rhondda-vawr turns abruptly to the west, and forms two other falls near to Nant-rhyd-y-cyllyll.

On the east, in a rocky region not far from Bwlch-y-lladron, a mountain pass called by that name, rises the Rhondda-fychan, which, by the tributary contributions of six small rivulets flowing from the surrounding heights, soon becomes a rapid river, sending its tide in a south-westerly direction towards its point of junction with the Rhondda-vawr. This latter has its birth-place about one mile distant from the source of the Fychan, near Craig-y-Lynn, the loftiest peak in Glamorganshire, at the foot of which it winds its devious course. Nothing can exceed the peculiar effect produced by the appearance of Craig-y-Lynn, which rises almost perpendicularly in towering sublimity at the end of the narrowing dell, through which the river finds its channel, and seems as if to deny all egress to the traveller's foot. The summit of the cliff is

broad, and is here and there fringed with scanty verdure, which the cattle from the opposite lands, with instinctive sagacity, had wandered here to graze upon, adding much to the picturesque character of the scene.

The path that leads out of the valley is by a difficult and winding ascent over a mountain to the right of Craig-y-Lynn. The craggy and broken rocks, the falling torrents, and the precipitous nature of some part of the road, rendered this one of the most fatiguing passages I had experienced during my Wanderings. To the left of the dell, Craig-y-Lynn recedes from its straight line and sweeps round an extensive circuit, and again projects as before, forming almost the figure of a horse-shoe. Upon the west horn of the cliff is Llyn Fach, a fine fresh water lake of great depth and considerable extent, well stored with the fish usually found in these alpine situations. On the east horn, which was near to the track over which I was clambering, is Llyn Fawr, another lake of larger size and similar quality. These basins of clear shining waters, stored with life, and almost inaccessible in their solitudes, were now before me; and on every side the prospect, from the commanding height I occupied, was sublime, romantic, and beautiful. In descending the mountain over a rough and dreary road, I reached the little hamlet of Rhydgroes, and thence pursued my way till I arrived fatigued, yet delighted, at the little inn, called the Angel, at Pont Neath Vaughan. Mine hostess contrived to make the accommodations tolerably comfortable, it therefore became my home during the greatest part of my stay in this neighbourhood, from which I diverged to the varied and extraordinary scenery of the surrounding country.

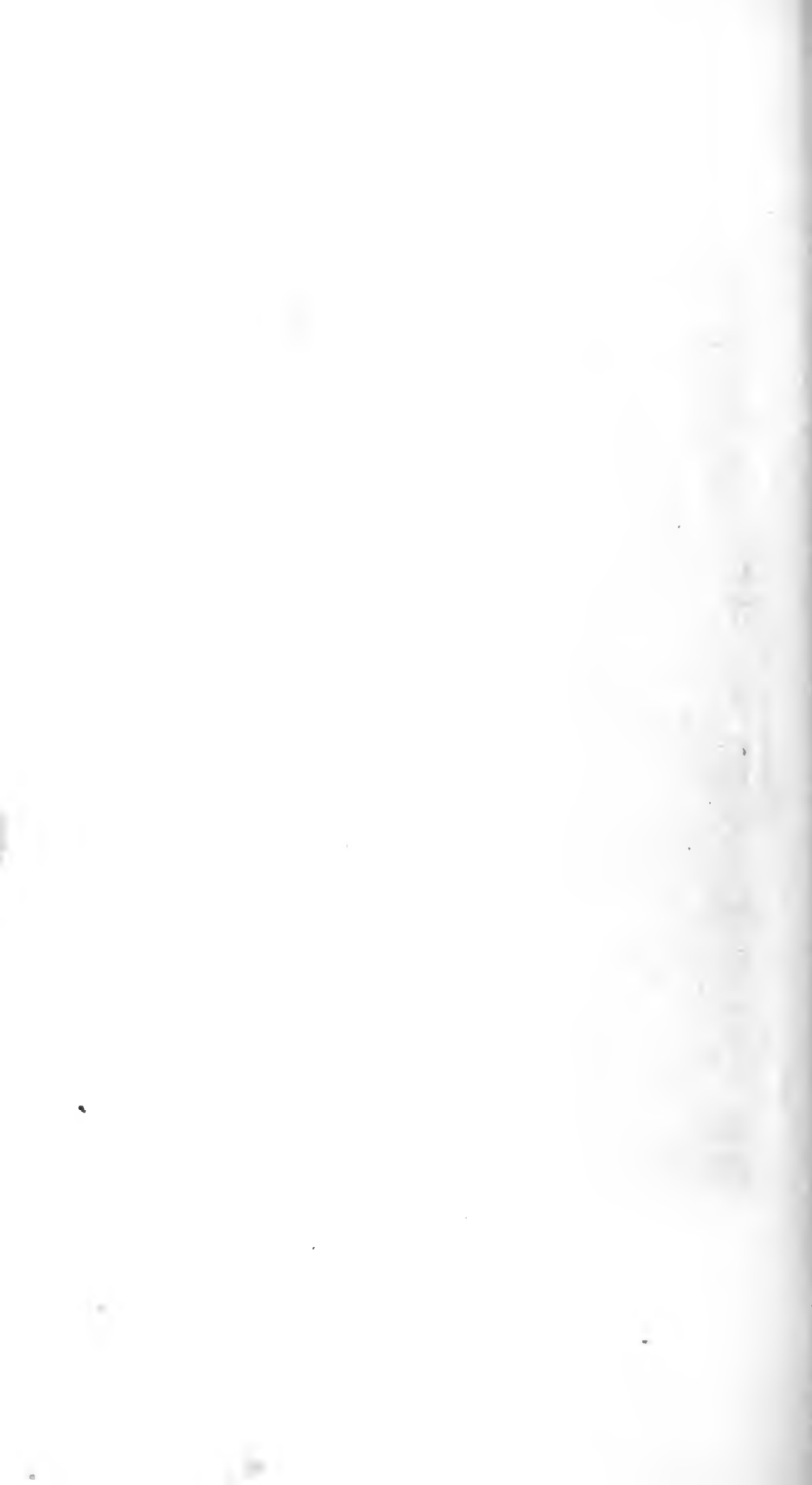
The first visit I paid on the following morning was to the

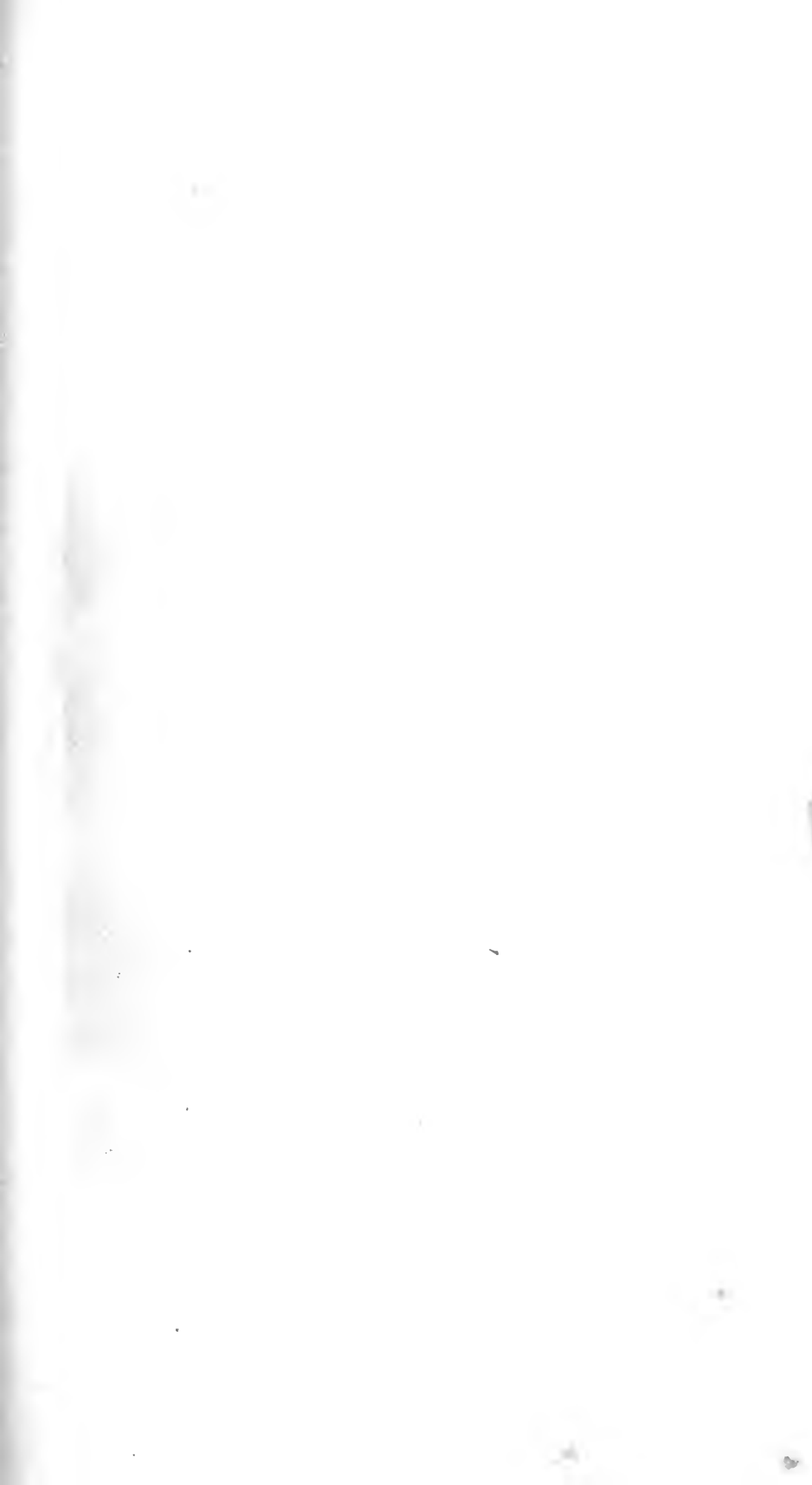
Vale of Neath, which stretches itself from the little village of my temporary sojourn, and extends southward about ten miles, varying in width from less than one to two or three miles. Though the Vale of Neath does not present so rich a scene of cultivation as many other Welsh valleys, yet it possesses many subjects of great picturesque beauty. Seen as it was by me, after my late wandering amidst the untameable wildness of the Glamorganshire mountains, and enriched in effect by the many-coloured autumnal hues and the soft touches of the year's decline, it was in a peculiar degree both interesting and delightful. The vale exhibits several long reaches of quiet rural beauty, enclosed by two ranges of hills which run the whole extent, with occasional high rocks, covered for the most part with forest foliage, and rearing above all their high and weather-beaten heads. Near the centre of the vale is the Melincourt fall, a beautiful cascade, surrounded by romantic scenery; and at no great distance from it, the pleasing and richly cultivated estate of Rheola. With the Vale of Neath I closed my pilgrimage of the day, proposing on the succeeding morning to commence my diurnal range with an inspection of the waterfalls near the village.

The Purthen river has its course on the west of Pont Neath Vaughan, at a short distance from which it forms its junction with the Neath-fychan. A line of high ground, at a little distance on either side, runs parallel with the river as far as Nant y Gwal. The right bank is richly clothed with timber of the finest growth, while the left presents its bold peaks in distinct contrast. Stretching at a distance to the north-west is the enormous ridge of Careg-llwyd, throwing its gigantic arms both east and west, and enclosing a large circular track of elevated ground, near which the great Roman road















of Sarn Helen traversed, crossing this tremendous ridge near the twin summits of Maes Gawnen.

The great fall on the Purthen,—which is called in the language of the country, Ysgwd Einon Gam, lame Einon's waterfall—from the peculiarity of the situation, is not perceived or heard till the wanderer's foot has approached near to the high and rugged crag that beetles over the dark waters beneath. The effect is greatly heightened by the seclusion of the woody glen in which it unexpectedly opens upon the view, and the quiet path towards it through the green meadows of the valley. A perpendicular cliff rears its bald, frowning brow right in front of the cascade, like an eternal watcher of its ceaseless fall. On the right, and with an aspect less rugged and high, rises another cliff, as if in companionship with its gigantic neighbour: between the latter and the opposite rocks the river pours its rolling tide in one sheet of bright foaming water, to the distance of eighty feet. At the bottom of the taller cliff there is a profuse vegetation and some luxuriant trees; but the sides of the lesser are completely clothed with verdure, and richly-coloured and delicately-tinted foliage. On the top, in majestic triumph and ineffable dignity, a single oak throws its broad arms over the falling waters, which from its size and moss-covered trunk, must have been the associate of the stern cliff for many generations past.

The rocks on the opposite side are almost naked, with only here and there a few stunted shrubs which seem to struggle for existence in their occasional fissures; but even these contribute to the richness of this beautifully composed picture, by the variously-shaded horizontal lines of strata of which they are formed—by the rich and many coloured mosses that cover them—and by the fantastic, and in some instances, singularly

defined shapes that have been fashioned by the action of the air and water. In order to enjoy the subject to the fullest possible degree, I descended between the two cliffs, a somewhat perilous enterprize, which I accomplished by the aid of sundry rocky projections, broken tree-roots and trunks, and by swinging myself by the pendant branches from place to place, until I arrived safely at the bottom. The scene up the river is of unspeakable grandeur, and such as amply to repay the fatigue and hazard of the descent. The stern, primeval, granite rocks, on the right, present their rude immoveable features amidst the graceful, bending, richly-coloured foliage of the willow, the mountain ash, and the delicate birch, to the very water's brink; while the interstices are filled up with luxuriant creepers of all hues of green, and red, and blue, and yellow, which distinguish their leaves and flowers. On the left is the smooth, unbroken, rocky face of the mountain, which seems nearly to have forbidden the intrusion of all vegetable substances, except of the cryptogamia family, of which it supports numerous party-coloured tribes.

The lesser fall of the Purthen, which is to be found about half a mile nearer Pont Neath Vaughan, is but a mimic representation of the same romantic features which compose the greater, and is exceedingly beautiful of its kind.

Craig-y-Dinas rises at a short distance from Pont Neath Vaughan to the north-eastward, and is a bold precipitous limestone rock of great elevation, backed by the still higher land of Cilhepste-cerig. From the summit of this lofty crag I enjoyed a splendid prospect, looking down the lovely vale of Neath; comprehending in the nearer view to the right and left the wooded mountain hollows of Cwm Melte and









Cwm Carnrust, sleeping in their solitary rock-environed retreats. Immediately below me flowed the small streamlet of the *Sychrhid*, or dry ford, as it is sometimes termed, which for a short space divides the counties of Brecknock and Glamorgan, and hurries by the foot of *Craig-y-Dinas* to join the *Melte*.

Even-tide was now slowly approaching, and the distant prospects had already become dim and obscure, when I retraced my steps towards Pont Neath Vaughan. I lingered not to catch the little vignettes of natural beauty which every outlet offered to my sight; for the shadowy clouds, which had been chasing each other with rapid motion through the day, were gathering into broader masses. One cloud of a more ominous character than the rest, had for some time hung its dark shroud in the north east, on the top of the lofty *Cefn Cadlan*. The wind sighed long and heavily through the mountain chasm, or swept in fitful gusts along the high ridges and openings. Before I reached my home at the little inn, however, it had dropped into a treacherous calm. I was almost repining at the unnecessary haste with which I had quitted my prospect-ground on the hill, and abruptly interrupted that calm train of thought which takes possession of the mind as the fading landscape becomes less and less, when I was startled by the flickering, restless motion of the leaves, which indicated that secret agitation of the air that almost always precedes a storm. The dark cloud of the *Cefn Cadlan*, which had been for some time stationary, appeared to be disrupted from its pinnacle, and rolling its surcharged body rapidly towards the village. I had scarcely entered, and bespoke the attentions of mine host to supply the wants which my long walk had created, when the elemental strife

began:—the thunder, which had sounded at a distance, approached fearfully near—it no longer maintained that majestic roll which fills the mind with awe and reverence, but burst with a crackling explosion, that, by its proximity, inspired terror and alarm. The forked lightnings quivered in the welkin with awful velocity, and in almost unremitting succession, and seemed to light up all Nature with an unearthly and spectral glow by its ‘sulph’rous and thought-executing fires.’ The wind, which at the commencement of the storm had been uncertain and gusty, now increased to a wild hurricane; and the rain, which had only before fallen in large single drops, soon descended in torrents.

‘ Since I was man,

Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,

Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never

Remember to have heard.’

It was sometime before the storm abated, and then only gradually; at length the wind, which before had swept along with such reckless fury, sighed itself, like a fretful and worn-out child, to rest. The thunder, ‘Heaven’s artillery,’ ceased to roar, and was only heard reverberating amongst the hills, awakening their distant echoes. The lightning no longer darting, with a scorpion tongue, through the wide air, gently played, as if in sport, over the loftiest pinnacles of Bryndu, or along the enormous ridge of Y Fan Dringarth: the huge drops of torrent-rain, that had been falling like a deluge, subsided into a gentle refreshing shower. The tempest had continued so long, that it was near midnight ere I retired to rest: I threw open the casement of my window to enjoy for a moment, the calm clear scene that had succeeded to the tumultuous storm. The stars shone with a

brightness and intensity, which is only to be observed in these altitudes; the clouds lay in fleecy brightness, 'like a flock at rest,' or if they gently moved, and obscured for a while the moon's quiet saintly face, it was only to part again before her renewed splendours,

'As though a silv'ry veil were rent
From the jewell'd brow of a queen.'

A gentle, settled, and holy stillness seemed to rest on all the face of Nature, and I closed my window to seek, with a deeply-touched heart, the tranquil slumbers of my humble pallet.

I now took my leave of Pont Neath Vaughan, a little village which has some claim to consideration from its antiquity, but more from its delightful situation, being seated at the head of the interesting Vale of Neath, and surrounded, for many miles, by high, bleak and romantic mountains. I deem it right, however, before my departure, to correct many misstatements which have been made respecting the rivers and mountain torrents in this district. Having taken many a weary step, and scaled many a lofty ridge, to trace the sources of the streams which form the great Neath river, I can assure the gentle reader that he may receive my record with implicit faith. Looking north from the Angel Inn, the most westerly of these streams is the *Parthen*, which rises near Capel-Coelbren, and, after dividing the counties of Glamorgan and Brecon for four miles, falls into the *Neath-fychan*, about a mile above Pont Neath Vaughan: the latter stream rises due north, at a distance of eight or ten miles among the hills. The *Melte* has also a northerly bearing; it is formed by the confluence of two rivulets a mile above Ystradfellte, called *Llia* and *Dringarth*, and is afterwards augmented, within

three miles of Pont Neath Vaughan, by the rapid mountain torrent called *Hepste*, rising ten miles beyond, in one of the cwms near the summit of the Brecknockshire Beacon. In a meadow close to the Angel Inn, the two rivers *Melte* and *Neath-fychan* unite their waters, and then begins the Neath river. There are, also, half a dozen minor streams in this vicinity, one of the most remarkable of which is the *Sychrhid*, near Craig-y-Dinas.

An early breakfast prepared me to sustain the fatigue, and to accomplish the object, of another day's inspection of the enchanting scenery so profusely spread around this neighbourhood. 'The breezy call of incense-breathing morn' seemed to invite me forth to partake of the delights which Nature had prepared amidst her mountains and woodlands. The early birds were on the wing, making the air vocal with their melody; and the shallow stream of the Neath-fychan rippled garrulously over its rocky bed.

On departing from Pont Neath Vaughan, I took the same route as on the day before, and ascended, with renewed spirits and elastic step, the southern path that leads over Craig-y-Dinas. I stayed not to enjoy again the scenes of the past evening, but hastened forward to accumulate the treasures which almost every step afforded. It would have been impossible to have passed over the high ground of Cilhepste-fach, immediately beyond the broad rock I had just traversed, without pausing to cast 'one longing, lingering look' over the enchanting Vale of Neath. Pursuing my path over this elevated track, I now first caught sight of that fine river the Hepste, one of the objects of my search, peacefully gliding through a richly wooded dingle to the point where it joins its sister stream, the Melte.

I traced a zigzag path on the high ground above the stream of the Hepste, and then threading my way down the cwm amidst a forest of trees and underwood, with the noise of the cascades constantly breaking upon the ear, reached the higher fall of the river. It consists of one broad sheet, and descends a distance of forty feet into a large and deep basin below. So rapid is the torrent, that the path to the other side of the stream is under the falling sheet of water, which roars with a deafening noise as its fretted stream reaches the bottom of the fall,—then billowing in its deep channel, or making eddying circles as if to regain its wonted composure, it sends forward at last its majestic stream with the same joyous haste and swelling importance as before.

On my path amidst the trees and rocks to the junction of the two rivers, I passed the three lower falls, which the heavy storm of the preceding evening had encreased to their full force of magnificent display. I now once more turned away to the high ground, almost relieved that the deafening sound of the roaring cataracts had subsided from the distance into the solemn and ceaseless murmur that seems eternally to pervade these regions.

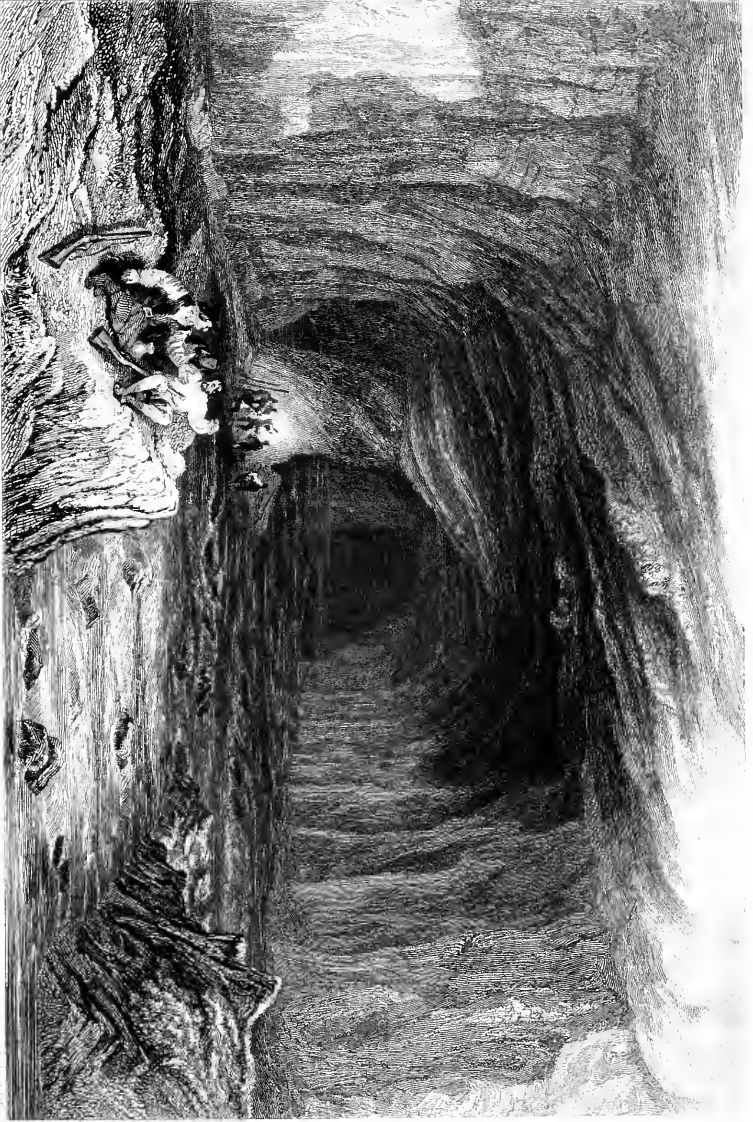
Passing the farm house of Cilhepste-coed, I directed my steps again towards the Melte. There are three waterfalls on this river, the most distinguished is called Clungwyn, and is the highest upon the stream; its peculiar characteristic is in the great volume of water it throws over an abrupt projection at the height of seventy feet. There is no approaching it from below, all access being closed by the rocky precipitous banks of the river, and it loses the richer beauties which belong to the falls of the Hepste, while it maintains a successful rivalry in the more awful and sublime features of the mountain cataract.

Advancing up the rich cwm of the Melte, I passed the farm of Hendre-bolon: pursuing my way again towards the stream, I reached another called Cwm Porth, on which is to be found that stupendous natural cavern, through the dark hollow of which the Melte runs for nearly four hundred yards, without in the slightest degree disturbing the incumbent surface of the land. The river rolls its dark tide beneath, and the harvest field waves above, as it has done for generations past.

The cavern called Cwm Porth is within two miles of Ystrad-fellte. The approach on the upper or northern part of the river is exceedingly picturesque; but the visitor is not aware of the stupendous natural viaduct he has the opportunity of exploring until he reaches the river, when he feels the full force of its peculiar wildness and grandeur. On either side of the opening, numbers of forest and other trees, of great diversity of form and variety of foliage, grow spontaneously; even in the fissures of the bold rocks, high above the head of the spectator, large trees are seen expanding towards the sky. At the entrance, the cavern is about forty feet wide and twenty high. There is sufficient light, on a fine day, for examining about fifty yards of this natural tunnel when it gradually fades away into impenetrable gloom, and nothing but the blaze of a flambeau will enable the visitor to complete the inspection of this extraordinary place.









CHAPTER XVII.

TRECASTLE—BRECON—LLANTONY.

AND oft the craggy cliff he lov'd to climb,
When all in mist the world below was lost.
What dreadful pleasure! there to stand sublime,
Like shipwreck'd mariner on desert coast,
And view the enormous waste of vapour, toss'd
In billows, lengthening to the horizon round,
Now scoop'd in gulfs, with mountains now emboss'd!
And hear the voice of mirth and song rebound,
Flocks, herds, and waterfalls, along the hoar profound!

Beattie.

THE inhabitant of one of the quiet rural districts of 'merry England,' whose eye has been accustomed to rest only upon the green slopes and flower-enamelled meadows of his native land, teeming with happy life and rich in verdant beauty, can form no adequate idea of the scene which is presented in a region of sterile rocks, interchanged only here and there by solitary cwms or hollows, where a scanty vegetation struggles for existence, and over which the foot of the enterprising traveller rarely treads.

The county of Brecknock, like that of its neighbour Glamorgan, presents, in many parts, the same wild features of untamed Nature that it did when the ancient lords of Cambria

left it to the undisputed possession of its aboriginal tenants, the foxes,* while they chose their more genial dwelling places in the fertile vales lying east of the Severn.

The lofty ridge of the Epynt mountains stretches itself in a north easterly direction, from the confines of Carmarthen-shire, nearly up to the little town of Builth, dividing the county of Brecknock into two unequal parts. The southern portion of the county sustains a chain of enormous rocky elevations, commencing also in the neighbouring county of Carmarthen, and continuing in successive ridges till it terminates in the east near the Usk, a little below the town of Crickhowel. Between these chains, to the westward, and appearing as if to make up the circle of rocks, rises abruptly the Black Mountain, near to the small hamlet of Talgarth.

The old road, as it is called, from Ystradfellte to Brecknock traverses the mountain district, and as it comprehended many of the wild features of the county, I chose it for my track as far as my wanderings might render it available. About two miles from the village I came to another fall of the Melte, which, although extremely picturesque, from the angular direction in which the river is projected, is unaccompanied either by the luxuriant vegetation, or the romantic character which give so much beauty and interest to the others. Beyond this fall the scene became indescribably dreary. Immediately before and around me arose hill after hill, in weary succession, whose dull monotonous brown turf afforded but a bare existence to the meagre flocks that sought their pasture. On the right and left towered the bald rocky summits of Y Fan-llia and Y Fan-nedd, like the time-worn sentinels of the district over which I was travelling. That portion of the great *Strata*

* The primitive name of Brecknockshire was Garth Madrin, the Fox-hold.

Montana, known by the name of Sarn Helen, traverses for a considerable length of way the same elevated direction; but the track of the haughty Roman diverges off westerly, near to a great stone, called Maen-llia, that is conspicuously placed on this spot, and gradually descends on the south side of the pleasant vale of Senni, towards the point where it joins the *Julia Strata*, on its road to the great station of Gaer. My path bent in an easterly direction, and brought me to the head of the precipitous dingle of Cwm-du, through which it passes, skirted on the right by the lofty mountain ridge of Y Fan-frynach, nearly up to the town of Brecknock. Fatigued by the difficult road I had been for some time traversing, and wearied with the stern aspect of those eternal rocks, I determined to seek the genial relief of a day's placid retreat to the rich valley of the Usk.

I rose early; for to me a morning in waning Autumn yields the greatest enjoyment which the seasons, in their ceaseless revolution, afford. There is a peculiar freshness in the early air which animates the spirits, and raises up pleasant images in the mind—

‘ It fans the feverish brow,

And cheerily reillumes the lambent flame of life.’

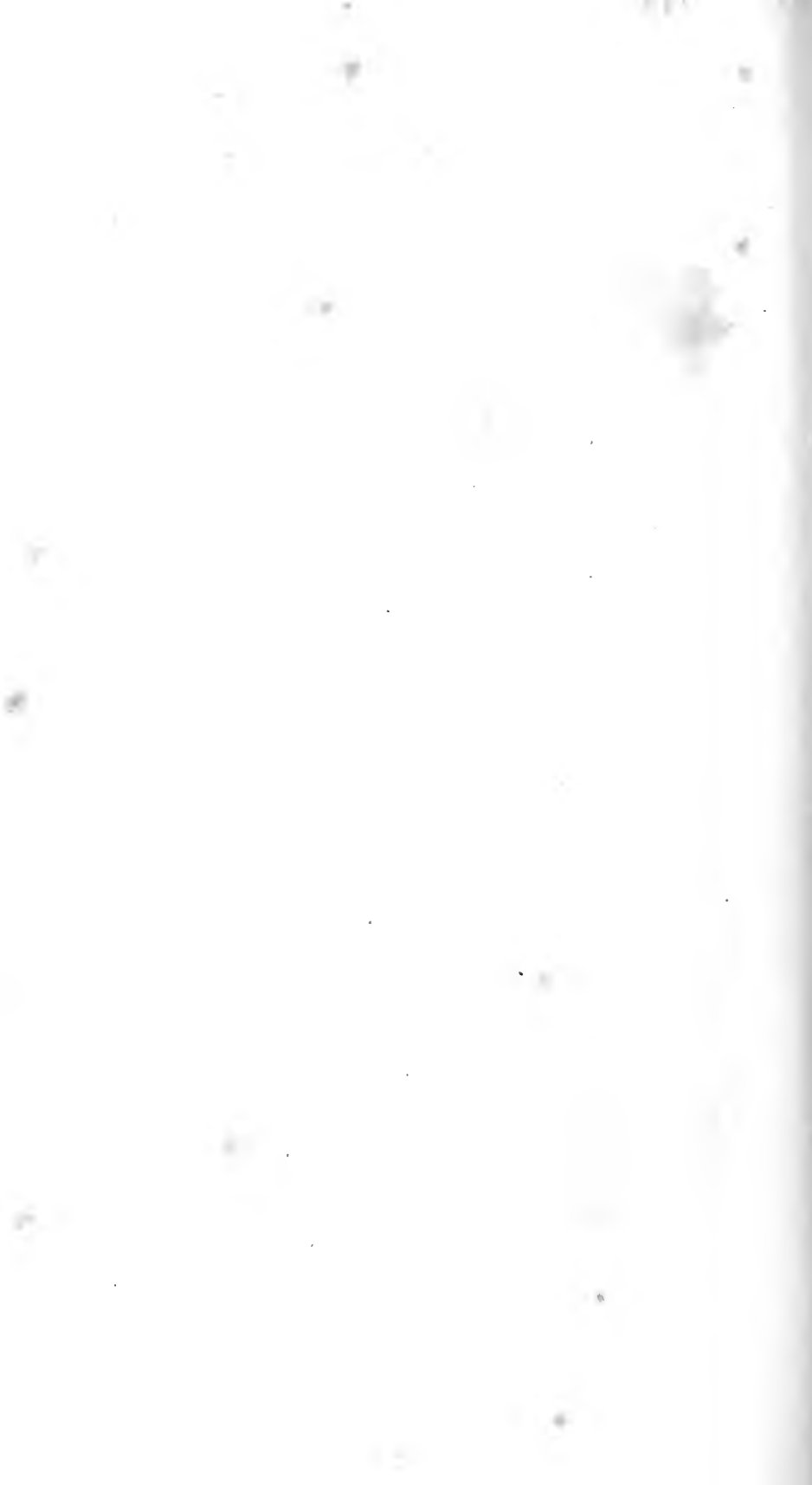
There is a rich composure in the manifold colours of the forest leaves, and a mellow harmony, that naturally belong to the time of the year, all of which throw their influence over the spirit. Besides this, in an Autumn day are those frequent changes which possess an ineffable charm for the wayward mind. The copious dews of early morning are dispersed by the bright sunshine, that frequently plays with an intensity and a fierceness which Midsummer fails to bring. Then there is the uncertain wind, which sweeps in sudden and capricious gusts, scattering the bright leaves, and whirling

them in eddies all around; there is the drizzling shower, pattering monotonously, but not unmusically, amongst the forest trees; and then, not unfrequently, there is the wild tempest to close up the evening.

The river Usk rises in the mountain range called the Carmarthenshire Fan, which divides the counties at their westerly point, near Trecastle. From this place it rolls its tide in an easterly course towards Brecknock and Crickhowel, where it enters the county of Monmouth, and passing by the towns of Abergavenny, Usk, Caerleon, and Newport, empties itself into the estuary of the Severn. The lower vale is the most luxuriant and romantic; but the passage of the river from Trecastle to the town in which I was sojourning, or along the Upper Vale, as it is called, has its own peculiar beauties. The road from Trecastle runs on the right of the river, sometimes rising in the form of a terrace above it, and again tracing its undulating line by its silvery stream, sharing in all the beauties of its devious course. The Cray and the Isker pour their waters into its channel before it reaches Brecknock. The pleasant villages of Lanspyddid and Aberisker may be seen from its banks; and the Roman encampment on a rising ground, near the confluence of the Isker and the Usk, will detain and delight the antiquarian in his researches. This beautiful river derives much of its captivating character from the magnificent timber that decorates its shelving banks, and from the occasional glades and openings they afford, through which the clear bright stream is seen meandering and flowing in its course. The eye of the Wanderer, which had gazed with inexpressible delight upon these enchanting scenes, was in an especial manner refreshed when he came, unexpectedly, within sight of the romantic bridge of Pont Pwl Gwyn, stretching its single chord across the channel of the river. Fir trees of ex-

From the Wild Point Nelson (Tasmania) to Brown





traordinary growth, such as are rarely seen but in this district, reared high their green peaks in the foreground, and groves of majestic oaks mingled their varied autumnal hues in one rich and harmonious combination, from the summits of the verging banks to the water's edge. The looming line of distant hills, irradiated with the last rays of the setting sun, formed the back-ground of this exquisite picture, while the gentle Usk glided in soft unruffled beauty through the tranquil scene.

Brecknock, or to recall its ancient and more classical name of Aberhonddu, derived from the circumstance of its standing at the point where the Honddu unites its waters with the Usk, is one of the pleasantest towns of the Principality. It possesses architectural remains which connect it with the most important events of past ages, and is surrounded by natural objects of the most sublime and beautiful character. The castle, which was one of the earliest structures of this description in Wales, once occupied the brow of an abrupt hill, on a point of land washed on the south and east by the waters of the Honddu. It was built by the Norman, Bernard de Newmarch, after his signal defeat of the Welsh in this district, with a magnificence and strength calculated to overawe his conquered subjects. It arose in the eleventh century, and has passed through several powerful families, who successively improved and enlarged it, till it was besieged, and nearly destroyed, in the civil wars between Charles and his Parliament. Its proud bearing on the banks of the subject waters of the Honddu and the Usk, with the chivalric passages and baronial splendour which mark its eventful history, are all, however, reduced to a few miserable ruins; but the rivers still glide on as heretofore—with the same eagerness and impetuosity as they did when the Norman trod upon their banks.

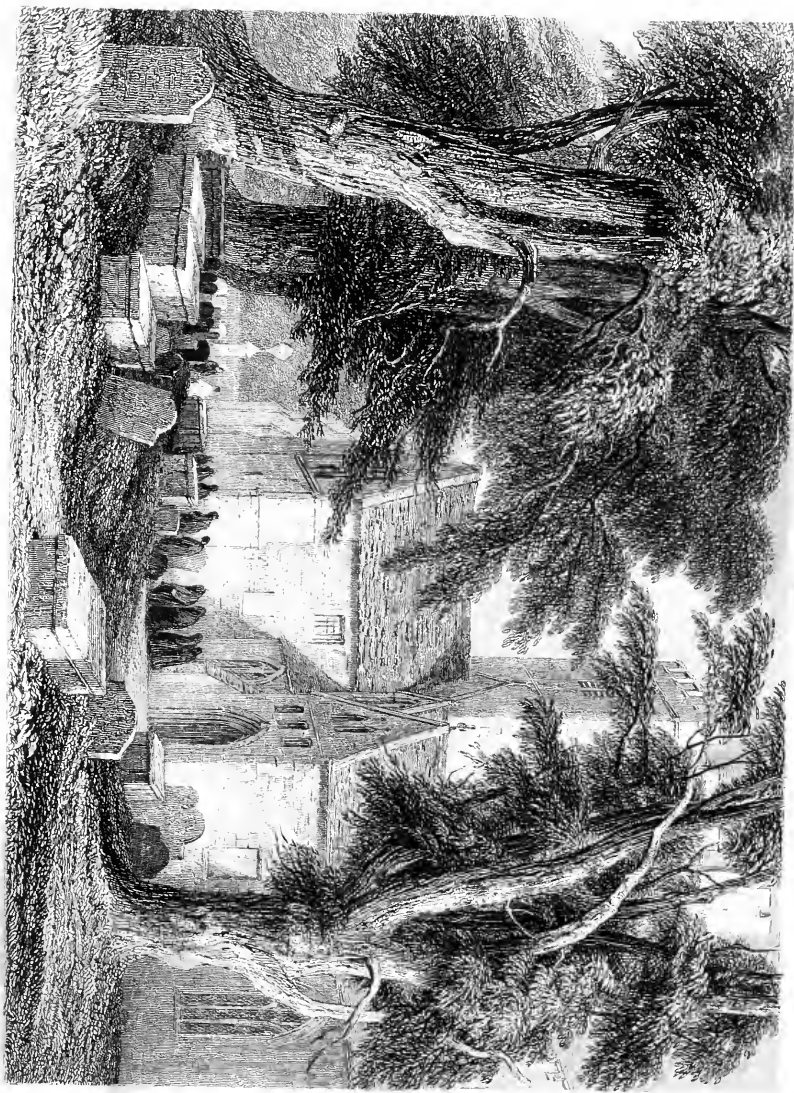
The site of the castle was a parallelogram, with a massy

outward wall and strong angular watch towers. The entrance was on the western and eastern sides, with a deep moat surrounding the whole, over which were thrown bridges of communication. The principal part now remaining is that which once formed the keep, on an artificial mound to the north east, designated Ely Tower, from its having been the place of imprisonment to Morton, Bishop of Ely. To this gloomy tower did the crafty Buckingham repair, when disappointed of the ambitious hopes which the crooked-back tyrant had led him to indulge, to hold a secret conference with the imprisoned bishop; and here did these wily politicians concert the plan which, in its progress, led the warrior to the scaffold, and the churchman to the highest honours of the hierarchy.

It is curious to contemplate that union of devout feeling with natural ferocity and social injustice which distinguished this age of military adventure and conquest. There is scarcely any history left upon record which has laid open those secret operations of the mind which gave rise to this singular connection during the dark ages; but the fact is demonstrated by the numerous religious houses which the Norman conquerors of this country every where erected. The Lord of Brecknock, in accordance with the character of the times, when he had subjugated the inhabitants of this district, reared at once the fortress, which has just been described, to consolidate his conquest, and a Benedictine Priory which he dedicated to the apostle St. John, and whose holy brotherhood ministered spiritual instruction and consolation in the chapel built within the fortress. The Priory, with its church bearing the same apostolical designation, occupied a situation near to the castle, on the western bank of the Honddu. The former has almost entirely disappeared, save an embattled









wall, while an ancient mansion bears its title and occupies its site; but the Church has been preserved with great care, and displays the peculiar features of its origin and history through so many generations, as well as the repairs and embellishments which have been so frequently supplied, and which are even now in progress within its sacred precincts.

The Priory Church stands on the north of the town; it is built in the form of a cross, from the centre of which rises an embattled tower. The churchyard is an object of great interest. Instead of sweet-scented flowers, the green turf of the graves is adorned with sprigs of the yew and the bay, which the hand of affection has placed there, according to the custom of this county. Venerable yew trees, of prodigious growth and age, claim almost a coexistent antiquity with the consecrated building, and throw an air of deep solemnity over the scene.

The tongue of land, near which the Priory stands, has furnished to the inhabitants of Brecknock one of the most beautiful public promenades in the empire. The walks are traced in undulating lines through the luxuriant groves that cover its surface, carrying their umbrageous shade down its sloping sides to the brink of the river, while the Honddu continues to sweep round this miniature headland, rolling its ceaseless tide as restless, turbulent, and clear as ever.

Besides the Benedictine Priory, there was another building of the same character, near the east end of the town, of the order of St. Dominic, which is said to have been erected by the same renowned Norman. This might have been the case but for one chronological fact, that the saint did not live till after the warrior was dead. This institution was transformed into a seat of learning by Henry the Eighth, at the general confiscation of religious houses, which took place in his reign.

The neighbourhood of Brecknock possesses that indefinable

charm which history and romance throw around the wild scenes of Nature. On the north and west lie the scattered fragments of British and Roman camps and entrenchments, and the battle field in which Welsh independence expired; on the south and east rise in gigantic splendour the forms of those magnificent mountains which have frowned alike on the passing generations of their British, Roman, and Norman possessors. Mount Denny, whose divaricated peaks are known by the modern name of the Brecknockshire Beacons, stretches itself in a south-easterly direction from Brecknock, through a lengthened succession of undulating ridges thrown into a variety of fantastic shapes, over which the clouds sweep in their racking career, or hang in graceful floating drapery of the most exquisite tissue. The more elevated and northern peaks are called Cader Arthur, or the Chair of Arthur. There is both a romantic and historical association with these enormous piles of rocks, as the renowned hero, whose name they bear, may be contemplated through the fables of poetry or the facts of history. In the phraseology of the bards, a public assembly of their body was always termed 'the Chair of Song.' These minstrel gatherings were invariably made in the open air, on some elevated place, or, in their figurative language, 'under the eye of the sun;' and as the Knight of the Round Table, during his reign, held a grand national meeting of the bards, the historian has assigned this majestic hill as the spot to which they repaired from all parts of the Principality, and where the institutes of their order were framed.

Wearied with a day's excursion, in which I had scaled the accessible steepes of the Beacons, I returned to mine host of the Castle hotel, at Brecon, to enjoy in his ample refreshments, and the consoling slumbers of the night, that rest

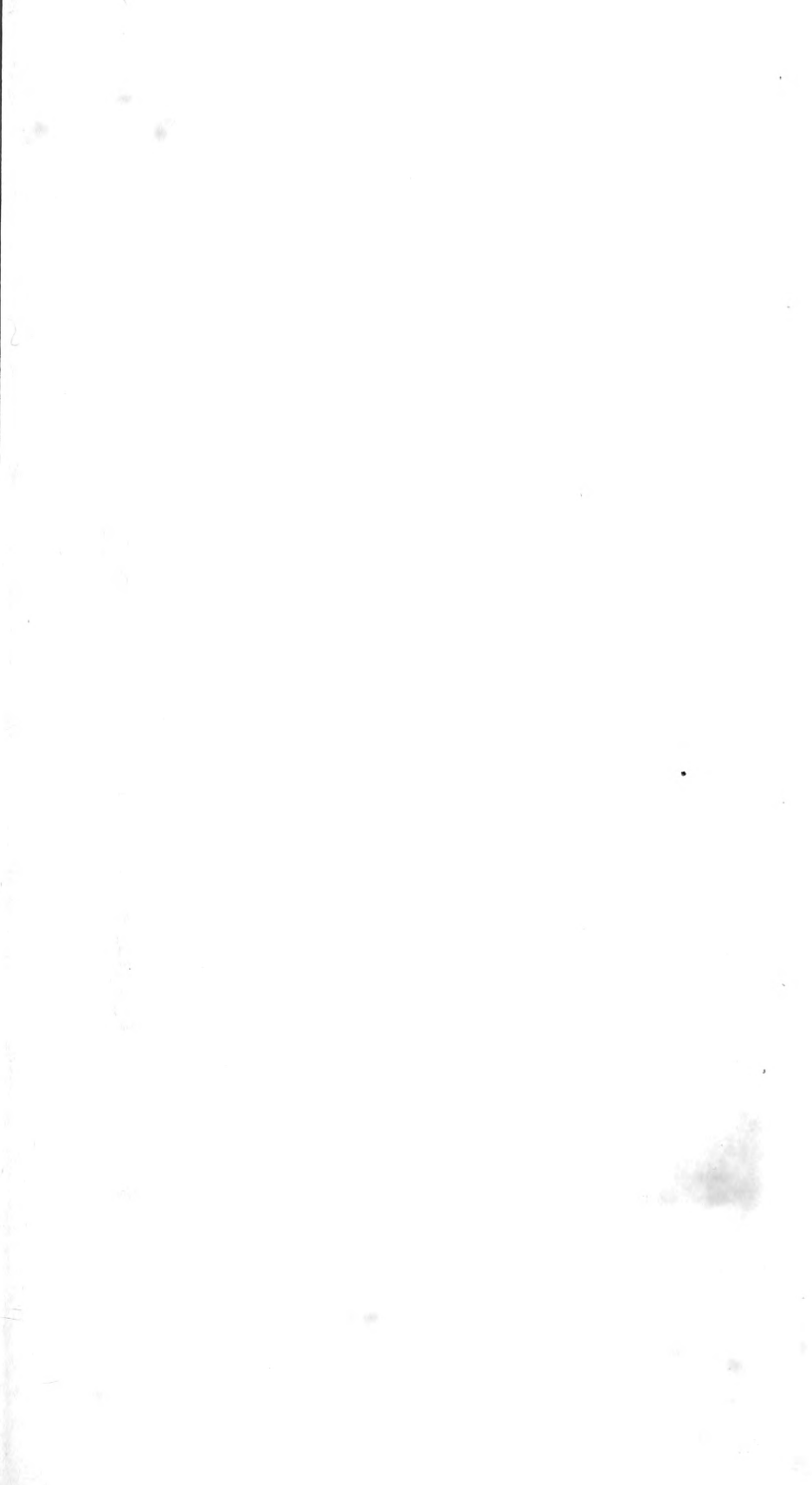
which was to prepare me for the journey of the following day to Llantony Abbey.*

While the dew yet rested upon the green meadows I set forward upon my route, making my first stage to Crickhowel. My cheerful road ran parallel with the channel of the lively Usk, whose waters, swelled by so many tributary streams, rolled onward through the vale in a full and majestic tide. I passed the Cromlech, usually called St. Illtid's hermitage, on the rising ground to the right, and ascended the mountain pass of Bwlch, from the summit of which the eye ranges over the beautiful valley of the Usk, with the meanderings of the river as it chafes round the plantations of Buckland, or washes the foot of the woody eminence of Peterstone. Many mansions in the most romantic situations, and smiling villages of tranquil beauty, diversified the way till I entered the little town of Crickhowel by the Old Gateway, as it is called, which once formed part of the castellated mansion of the first Herberts. There is little in this place to claim the attention of the traveller except the view from the narrow gothic bridge, the inconsiderable ruins of the old castle, and the picturesque situation of the town, built on the shelving side of

* It may be to the advantage of the tourist to inform him in this place, that one of the best views of the Beacons is obtained from the back parlour windows at the western end of the Castle Inn. Although apparently only about two miles distant, I found the ascent occupied several hours of persevering exertion. Taking the Merthyr road as far as Llyn y celyn, I branched off to the left, passing through the opening between the hills, called Cwm-llwch, to the summit of the highest eminence. The scene was indescribably grand: westerly, lay Llyn cwm llwch, a small lake below the Beacons, at a height probably of 2,500 feet above the sea; beyond it the farm of Ty-mawr, the highest on the mountains, below which is the road from Merthyr to Brecon; and in the extreme distance, Moel fen dy and the Carmarthenshire hills. To the north was traced, as in a map, the divisions of land below, dotted here and there with whitewashed cottages; beyond, the town of Brecon and the river Usk; and bounding the distant horizon, the hills near Builth. On the east, the lake of Llynfaddu and the Cradle Mountains. Southerly, a stupendous range of mountains, one rising beyond the other as far as Merthyr Tidvil, and more westerly to Pont Neath Vaughan.

a fine hill. I refreshed myself at Crickhowel before my pilgrimage to the Abbey, which was the principal subject of my day's research.

In a deep recess of the Black Mountains, at the extremity of the county of Monmouth, and occupying the gloomy vale of Ewias, stand the venerable ruins of Llantony Abbey. As if in unison with the barren rocks that environ it, scarcely a single tendril of green ivy has crept up the surface of its solemn walls to hide the severe simplicity of its monastic architecture; and but here and there a stripling shrub, surmounting its parapets, throws its brief shadow over the crumbling fragments of the sacred pile. The ponderous roof, and the southern and eastern walls of the abbey church, lie prostrate on the ground; but a double row of pointed arches reposing on massy piers, which separated the side aisles from the nave, with a series of small circular arches, and fragments of elaborate mouldings, remain to show the corresponding magnificence of those parts of the structure which they sustained and adorned, and to prove the mixed Saxon and Norman style of this fine edifice. A portion of the great tower yet exists, and the western front still stands in solitary grandeur. The valley which formerly afforded employment for the holy brotherhood, now yields its scanty herbage to the browsing flocks of the neighbouring farmer; and some ancient trees, at different points, mark in their green and yellow leaf the passage of the seasons, and linger as the time-worn chroniclers of this dreary solitude. The brawling Honddi, swelled by the mountain torrents, rolls a fretful tide over its bed of broken rocks, and washes the north-western side of the valley. Behind the ruins rise the lofty hills that bear the name of the place, and beyond them the rocky peaks of the Black Mountains, over which the









foot of man has scarcely ever trod, seeming as if to shut in this little spot from the observation of all the world.

Llantony Abbey was originally of the Cistercian order, and its history is to be gathered from the traditions of the early times. The legends tell that Saint David, the uncle of the renowned King Arthur, when he first beheld this solitary valley, was charmed with its entire seclusion from the world, and built a chapel on the spot.

‘ Here was it, stranger, that the patron saint
Of Cambria pass’d his age of penitence,
A solitary man; and here he made
His hermitage, the roots his food, his drink
Of Honddi’s mountain stream.’

One day a knight retainer of the Earl of Hereford, carried far out of his track in pursuit of the wild deer which haunted these savage hills, came unexpectedly upon the saint’s retreat. The knight was struck with the deep solitude of the place. He saw the little hermitage, and near it the recess where the holy man performed his early devotions, in which was placed a small crucifix and those emblems of mortality which the grave supplies. The mysterious air that pervaded the scene into which he was thus suddenly introduced, and the complete silence that reigned around, broken only by the sullen murmur of the Honddi’s stream, filled the mind of the knight with devout enthusiasm. He instantly forsook his chivalrous career—withdrew from all connection with the world, and in the words of the record, ‘ laid aside his belt, and girded himself with a rope; instead of fine linen he covered himself with hair cloth; and instead of his soldier’s robe, he loaded himself with weighty irons. The suit of armour, which before defended him from the darts of his enemies, he still wore as a garment to harden himself against the soft temptations of his old enemy, Satan; that as the outward man

was afflicted with austerity, the inner man might be secured for the service of God. That his zeal might not cool, he thus crucified himself, and continued his hard armour on his body until it was worn out with rust and age.' His austerity of life and great sanctity drew one devout associate to his cell, Ernest, confessor to Maude, wife of Henry I., and inspired many wealthy and powerful nobles with deep reverence for his character. Amongst the latter was Hugh de Lacey, who founded the Priory of the order of St. Austin on the site of the little hermitage. Llantony Abbey has experienced strange vicissitudes, and has been the subject of many whimsical circumstances in the course of its eventful history, till it was finally suppressed, with that of the same name in Gloucestershire, at the Reformation. Thus ends the legend of

' Llantony, famed in monkish tale,
And once the pride of Ewias' vale.'

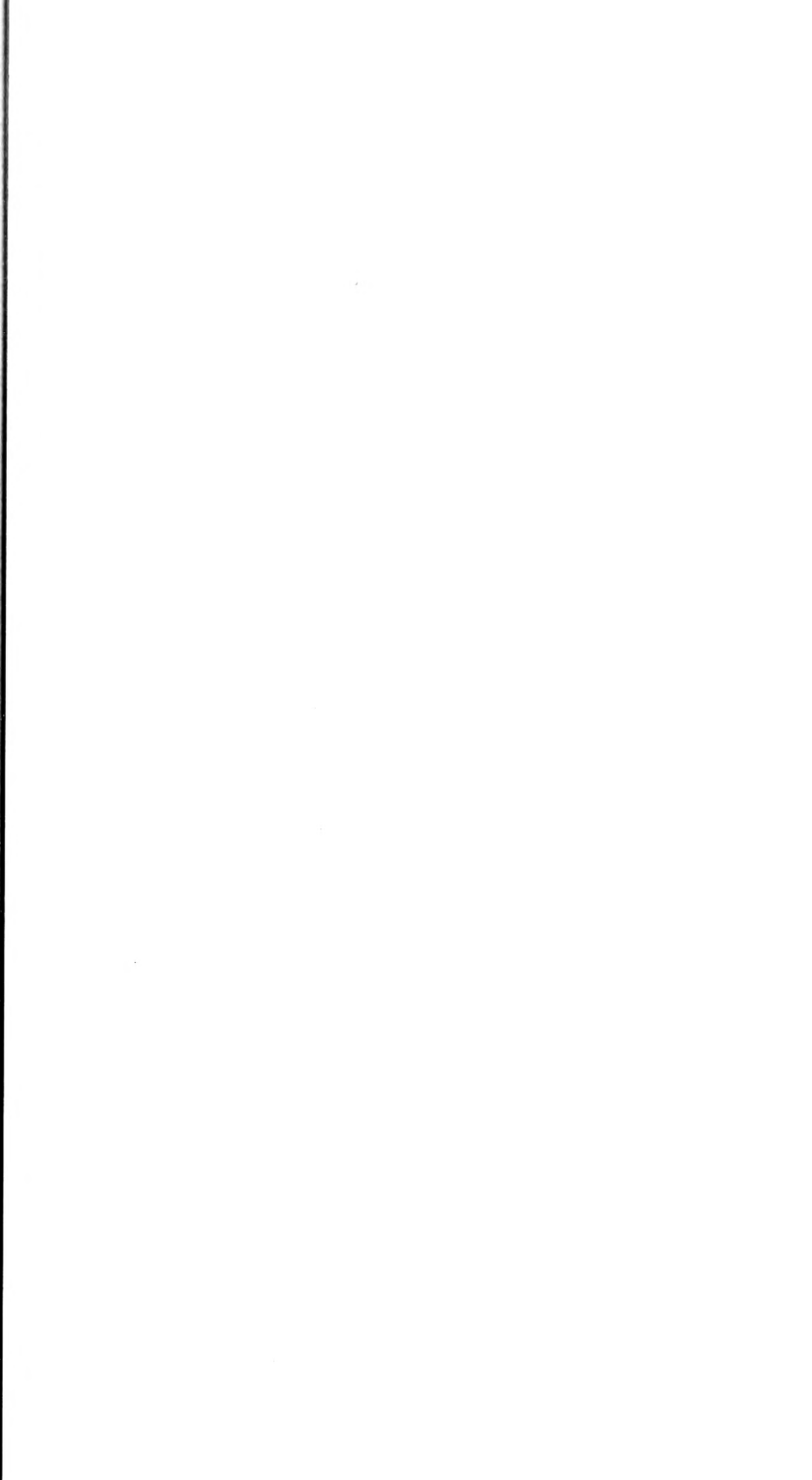
The last chapter of a book is something like the last day of a long and friendly visit. The sojourner spends it in adjusting all claims at the house of his host—in winding up the long family stories—and in leave-taking amongst all the acquaintance he has happened to make. The Wanderer over Cambria's land of marvels and minstrelsy has sought to fulfil the promises with which he commenced his pilgrimage—he now closes his book of legends;—and to all those surpassing beauties of mountain, hill, and valley; of open sea, broad river, and whispering stream; with their peculiar associations of history, poetry, and romance, to which his Wanderings have introduced him—he bids a long and last farewell.

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